

INDIAN FEUDALISM

c AD 300–1200

Second Edition

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This book which was first published in 1965 has generated a debate which is still alive Most criticisms have been derived from the West European model of feudalism, little realising that feudal formation was a fairly widespread phenomenon with its variants in different countries As far as the Indian experience is concerned, I have preferred to retain the old chain of arguments, hoping to present a further discussion of the problem at a later stage An attempt has, however, been made to further clarify the basic elements relating to the emergence of the landlord class and the subjection of the peasantry The contents have been elaborated, the concluding portion considerably expanded, and the bibliography updated

Mr J L Sardana and Dr K M Shreemali have been kind enough to prepare the index, and Mr V K Jain has helped me with the compilation of the bibliography I express my sincere thanks to all of them

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7 September 1980

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The present book is based on a course of six lectures I delivered at the University of Calcutta in 1964 under the auspices of the Centre of Advanced Study in Ancient Indian History and Culture at the invitation of its Director, Professor Niharranjan Ray I am grateful to him and the present Director, Professor D C Sircar, who kindly organised these lectures and the discussions that followed them, and expedited the publication of this work I wish to acknowledge my debt to Professor A L Basham, who has gone through the manuscript and pointed out errors, especially in regard to Indian shipping treated in Chapter VI, also to Dr B P Mazumdar, who has read the whole stuff and suggested some references My thanks are due to Dr (Mrs) Suvira Jaiswal and Dr Dwijendra Narayan Jha for preparing the index, and to Dr Sita Ram Roy and Mr Jagannath Mishra for correcting the proofs Finally, I thank the Pooran Press for their unfailing co-operation

As far as possible all long Sanskrit words or those joined by the rules of Samdhi have been separated by single hyphens, since double hyphens, desirable in my cases, were not available with the printers Diacritical marks have not been always used in well-known proper names nor in words of modern Indian languages Appendix I repeats some matter dealt with in the main body of the book, but has been included here to bring out the peculiarities of the land system in a semi-aboriginal tract

I am conscious of the difficulties besetting the study of feudalism in the Indian context But it is a challenge which has to be taken up and a beginning made Covering a period of about nine centuries, my study is intended to be a rough framework within which the problems raised here can be discussed in detail at a later stage Confined to Northern India, the present work concerns the political and economic aspects of feudalism, and does not consider its impact on social and cultural life In spite of

these limitations I will feel satisfied if the book succeeds in creating some awareness of the subject among serious students of Indian history

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15 August 1965

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARB	*Antiquarian Remains in Bihar*, D R Patil, Patna, 1963
AŚ	*Arthasastra* of Kautilya
ASR	*Archaeological Survey Reports* by A Cunningham
ASS	*Ānandāsrama Sanskrit Series*
BI	Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta
Br	*Bṛhaspati Smṛti*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, London
CCIM	*Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, I, Oxford, 1906
Cal	Calcutta Edition of the *Mahābharata*
CHI	*Cambridge History of India*, I, ed E J Rapson, Indian Reprint, Delhi, 1955
CII	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, I–III, London, 1888–1929, IV, Ootacamund, 1955
DK	*Dharmakosa* (in three parts), Laxmanshastri Joshi, Wai (Dist Satara), 1937–41
DN	*Dīgha Nikāya*
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*, Calcutta and Delhi
Gaut Dh S	*Gautama Dharmasutra*
GOS	Gaikwad Oriental Series, Baroda
HC	*Harsacarita* of Bānabhatta (Nirnayasāgara ed)
HCIP	*History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed R C Majumdar, Bombay 1951
HDS	*History of Dharmasāstra*, I-III, P V Kane, Poona, 1930–46
IA	*Indian Antiquary*, Bombay
IB	*Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, N G Majumdar, Rajshahi, 1929
IESHR	*Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Delhi
IHQ	*Indian Historical Quarterly*, Calcutta
IHR	*The Indian Historical Review*, New Delhi
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Baltimore
Jat	*Jātaka*
JBBRAS	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Bombay
JBORS	*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Patna
JBRS	*Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Patna
JDL	*Journal of Department of Letters*, Calcutta University
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Leiden
JIH	*Journal of Indian History*, Trivandrum
JNSI	*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Varanasi (Banaras)

JOR	*Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, London
KNS	*Kāmandaka Nitisara*
Kāma S	*Kāmasutra*
Kātyā	*Kātyāyana Smrti*
LP	*Lekhapaddhati*
Manu	*Manu Smrti*
Mārk P	*Mārkandeya Purana*
Mbh	*Mahābhārata*
Nār	*Nārada Smrti*
NS	New Series
PTS	Pali Text Society, London
SBE	*Sacred Books of the East*, 50 vols, ed F Max Muller, Oxford, 1879–1900
Sel Inscrr	*Select Inscriptions*, I, D C Sircar, Calcutta, 1942
ŚP	*Śanti Parva*
Śūdras	*Śūdras in Ancient India*, R S Sharma, Delhi, 1958
Vā P	*Vayu Purāna*
Vas Dh S	*Vasistha Dharmasūtra*
Visnu	*Visnu Smrti*
Yāj	*Yājñavalkya Smrti*

Besides the journals and reports covered by the abbreviations the following have also been used

Enquiry, Delhi
Indo-Asian Culture, New Delhi
Journal of Asian and African Studies, Leiden
Journal of Economic History, Wilmington
Journal of World History (UNESCO publication)
Journal of the U P Historical Society, Lucknow
Madras Report on Epigraphy, Madras
Proceedings of the 24th Session of the Indian History Congress, Delhi, 1961
The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies, Calcutta
Summaries of Papers, Indian History Congress, Silver Jubilee Session, Poona, 1963

ROMAN EQUIVALENTS OF NĀGARĪ LETTERS

अ a आ ā इ i ई ī

उ u ऊ ū ऋ r ए e

ऐ ai ओ o औ au

क् k ख् kh ग् g घ् gh

ङ ṅ च् c छ् ch ज् j

झ् jh ञ ñ ट् t ठ् th

ड् d ढ dh ण् n त् t

थ् th द् d ध् dh न् n

प् p फ् ph ब् b भ् bh

म् m य् y र् r ल् l

व् v श् s' ष् s स् s

ह् h

Anusvāra\m Visarga : h

CHAPTER I

ORIGINS AND FIRST PHASE
(*c* A D 300–750)

It is very difficult to define precisely the term feudalism Just as there are as many definitions of socialism as there are socialists, so also there are as many definitions of feudalism as there are scholars working on the subject The term is attributed variously to stages of historical development far removed from one another in time and place, such as the interregnum (2475–2160 B C) after the Old Kingdom in Egypt and to the Chou period in China (*c* 1122–250 B C), but generally it is applied to society in Europe from the fifth to the fifteenth century A D Even in the last case some stress the legal aspect of feudalism embodied in the contractual relationship between the lord and the vassal, while others emphasise its economic aspect manifested in the manorial system To us the European experience suggests that the political essence of feudalism lay in the organisation of the whole administrative structure on the basis of land, its economic essence lay in the institution of serfdom in which peasants were attached to the soil held by landed intermediaries placed between the king and the actual tillers, who had to pay rent in kind and labour to them The system was based on a self-sufficient economy in which things were mainly produced for the local use of the peasants and their lords and not for market It is therefore in the light of certain broad features of feudalism in this sense that we will investigate the origins and growth of feudalism in India

From the post-Maurya period, and especially from Gupta times, certain political and administrative developments tended to feudalise the state apparatus The most striking development was the practice of making land grants to the brāhmanas, a custom which was sanctified by the injunctions laid down in the Dharmaśāstras, the didactic portions of the Epic, and the Purānas, the *Anuśāsana Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* devotes a whole chapter to the praise of making gifts of land (*bhūmidāna-praśamsā*)

The early Pāli texts of the pre-Maurya period refer to the villages granted to the brāhmanas by the rulers of Kosala and Magadha, but they do not mention the abandonment of any administrative rights by the donors The same is the case with the earliest epigraphic record of a land grant, a Sātavāhana inscription of the first century B C , which refers to the grant of a village as a gift in the *aśvamedha* sacrifice [1] Surprisingly enough, administrative rights were perhaps given up for the first time in the grants made to Buddhist monks by the Sātavāhana ruler Gautamīputra Śātakarni in the second century A D The land granted to them could not be entered by royal troops, disturbed by government officials, or interfered with by the district police [2] Two significant features of such grants, which became more frequent from the fifth century A D , were the transfer of all sources of revenue, and the surrender of police and administrative functions The grants of the second century A D mention the transfer of the king's control only over salt, which implies that he retained certain other sources of revenue But in later grants, from the time of Pravarasena II Vākātaka onwards (fifth century A D), the ruler gave up his control over almost all sources of revenue, including pasturage, hides and charcoal, mines for the production of salt, forced labour, and all hidden treasures and deposits [3] The *Raghuvamśa* states that, among other things, mines constitute the wages (*vetana*) of the king for protecting the earth [4] According to some grants of the fourth and fifth centuries A D the brāhmanas were granted the right of enjoying the hidden treasures and deposits of the villages,[5] this meant the transfer of royal ownership over mines, which was an important sign of the king's sovereignty

Equally important is the fact that the donor not only abandoned his revenues but also the right to govern the inhabitants of the villages that were granted The Gupta period furnishes at least half a dozen instances of grants of apparently settled villages made to the brāhmanas by the big feudatories in Central India, in which the residents, including the cultivators and artisans, were

[1] *Sel Inscr* p 188, 1, 11
[2] Ibid , pp 192, 194–5
[3] Ibid , p 422, 11, 26–9
[4] XVII 66
[5] *CII*, III, 41, 1, 8, *Sel Inscr* , p 422, 1, 29

expressly asked by their respective rulers not only to pay the customary taxes to the donees, but also to obey their commands In two other land grants of post-Gupta times royal commands were issued to government officials employed as *sarvādhyakṣa* and also to regular soldiers and umbrella-bearers that they should not cause any disturbance to the brāhmanas [1] All this provides clear evidence of the surrender of the administrative power of the state

The inscriptions of the fifth century A D show that the ruler generally retained the right to punish thieves, which was one of the main bases of the state power The process of delegation reached its logical end when in later times the king made over to the brāhmanas not only this right, but also his right to punish all offences against family, property, person, etc In Central and Western India some royal donors conferred upon the grantees the right of trying cases in the donated villages Their grants use the term *abhyantarasiddhi*,[2] which has been interpreted variously [3] It makes sense if we take it as adjudication of internal disputes in the village, which is thus made completely self-dependent [4] Apparently this technical expression is the counterpart of *sa-danda-daś-āparādhah* used in north Indian grants But while the later limits the grantee's jurisdiction to criminal cases,[5] the former extends it to civil cases, so that armed with such powers the donees could turn the benefices into practically independent pockets

Of the seven organs of the state power mentioned in literary and epigraphic sources, taxation system and coercive power based on the army are rightly regarded as two vital elements If they are abandoned, the state power disintegrates But this is the position created by the grants made to the brāhmanas The fiefs are usually granted for as long as the existence of the sun and the moon, which implies the permanent break-up of the integrity of the state The grants to priests can be traced back to pre-Maurya and Maurya times Kautilya recommends grants of land in new settlements according to the *brahmadeya* tenure, which carries freedom from taxes and punishments [6] But the position changes

[1] R S Sharma, *'Politico-Legal Aspects of the Caste System'*, *JBRS*, XXXIX, 325
[2] *abhyantara-siddhikah*, *CII*, IV, 31, 1, 41
[3] *CII* IV, 154 fn 1
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid , III, 189–90, fn 4
[6] *AŚ*, II, 1

in the Gupta period Commenting on the term *brahmadeyya* in the early Pāli texts, Buddhaghosa, who flourished during the fifth century A D, states that the *brahmadeyya* grant carries with it judicial administrative rights,[1] which is corroborated by contemporary epigraphic evidence This interpretation of the term *brahmadeyya* does not reflect the position in the pre-Maurya period but in the time of the commentator Thus the widespread practice of making land grants in the Gupta period paved the way for the rise of brāhmana feudatories, who performed administrative functions not under the authority of the royal officers but almost independently What was implicit in earlier grants became explicit in grants from about A D 1000, and was well recognised in the administrative systems of the Turks Whatever might be the intentions of the donors, the grants helped to create powerful intermediaries wielding considerable economic and political power As the number of the land-owning brāhmanas went on increasing, some of them gradually shed their priestly functions and turned their chief attention to the management of land, in their case secular functions became more important than religious functions But above all, as a result of land grants made to the brāhmanas, the 'comprehensive competence based on centralised control', which was the hall-mark of the Maurya state, gave way to decentralisation in the post-Maurya and Gupta periods The functions of the collection of taxes, levy of forced labour, regulation of mines, agriculture, etc together with those of the maintenance of law and order, and defence which were hitherto performed by the state officials, were now step by step abandoned, first to the priestly class, and later to the warrior class

Gupta grants from Bengal and Central India confer the right of enjoying the revenues from land in perpetuity on the grantee, but they do not authorise him to alienate or grant his rents or land to others Perhaps the earliest record of this type comes from Indore in Central India where an inscription of A D 397 records the consent of one *mahārāja* Svāmidāsa, probably a feudatory of the Imperial Guptas, to the grant of a field by a merchant [2] The fact that Svāmidāsa was empowered to endorse the religious grant made by an individual in his jurisdiction suggests that as a feudatory he himself could make religious grants without royal

[1]PTS, *Pali-English Dictionary*, sv *brahmadeyya*

[2]*EI*, XV, 16, 11, 1–9 It is not quite clear whether the merchant was the donor

consent But neither in this case nor in the case of other Gupta feudatories such as the Parivrājaka and Ucchakalpa, who granted several villages, is there anything to show that they held land of the king Thus these grants do not illustrate true subinfeudation However, the Indore grant authorises the grantee to enjoy the field, cultivate it and get it cultivated so long as he observes the conditions of the *brahmadeya* grant [1] This leaves clear scope for creating tenants on the donated land and provides perhaps the earliest epigraphic evidence of the subinfeudation of the soil Although examples of this type are not found in other parts of the country, we have here the beginning of the process of subinfeudation which continued in the western part of Central India in the fifth century A D and characterised the grants of the Valabhi rulers to their donees in the sixth and seventh centuries

It is significant that the heart of the Gupta empire which covered the modern states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal hardly knows of any grant of village or land made by any feudatory chief without royal consent, all such grants being confined to the periphery of this area in the outlying regions whose chiefs owed only nominal allegiance to the Imperial Guptas Only towards the end of the rule of the Imperial Guptas such practices appeared in the kernel of their empire The *kumārāmātya-mahārāja* Nandana granted a village in the modern Gaya District in the middle of the sixth century A D [2] although this seemed to have been a royal prerogative of the Imperial Guptas in earlier times

According to the charters in return for land grants the priests were obliged to render religious services, which might secure the spiritual welfare of the donors or their ancestors The secular obligations of the priestly beneficiaries are rarely laid down, the only example is the Chammak copper-plate of the Vākātaka king Pravarsena II, which imposes certain obligations on one thousand brāhmanas who are granted one village [3] It lays down that they shall not conspire against the king and the kingdom, commit theft and adultery, slay brāhmaṇas and poison kings, etc , further they shall not wage war and do wrong to other villages [4] All these are

[1] *ucitaya brahmadeya-bhuktyā bhuñjatah kṛṣataḥ kṛṣapayatas-cah* Ibid , ll 6–7
[2] *JASB*, NS, V (1909), 164, *EI*, X, 12
[3] *CII*, III, 55
[4] Ibid , ll 39–43

negative obligations, which imply that the priests enjoyed the land on condition that they would not act in opposition to the established social and political system These were probably taken for granted on the part of the religious beneficiaries in other charters But it is natural to expect that the brāhmanas more than repaid their generous donors and patrons by maintaining law and order in the areas under their charge and impressing upon the people the sacred duty of carrying out their varna functions and of obeying the king, who from the Gupta period was represented as embodying in his person the attributes of various gods Hence whatever may have been the intentions of the donors, it would be wrong to think that these grants served only religious purposes Certainly the priests prayed for the spiritual well-being of the donors and their ancestors, and never supplied any soldiers as the bishops did in England, but where was the need for military service if the people could be persuaded to behave themselves and to acquiesce in the existing order?

In the Gupta period there is no direct epigraphic evidence of grants made to officers for their military and administrative services, although such a possibility cannot be entirely ruled out If we go by legal texts it would appear that heads of fiscal and administrative units based on the decimal system were paid by land grants The decimal system of territorial organisation was first outlined by Kauṭilya, who prescribes units of 800, 400, 200, 10 villages[1] and even of 5 villages, and names the officers as *pañcagramī, daśagrami, gopa, sthānika* and *samāhartā*[2] The *samāhartā* is to be paid in cash[3] although in the new settlements the *gopa* and the *sthānika* are to be granted land, which they cannot sell or dispose of in any other way[4] This apparently is in addition to their regular remuneration in cash, so that this feudal trait in the system of Kauṭilya seems to be very feeble But this is strengthened in the beginning of the Christian era, as can be inferred from the law-book of Manu Manu retains the decimal system by providing administrative units of 10, 20, 100, and 1000 villages[5] But he modifies the mode of payment materially by

[1] *AŚ*, II, 1
[2] Ibid , II, 35
[3] Ibid , V, 3
[4] Ibid , II, 1
[5] VII, 115–17

enjoining that officers in charge of these units should be paid by grants of land [1] This rule presents a sharp contrast to Kautilya's provision for payment in cash to practically all grades of officials The *Manu Smrti* recommends land grants for remunerating officials who are placed in charge of one, ten, twenty, a hundred or a thousand villages to collect royal dues (*rāja-pradeyāni*) and maintain law and order [2] This rule is reproduced in the law-book of Brhaspati[3] also, which may suggest that it continued to enjoy authority in the Gupta period Although the Gupta inscriptions do not refer to this practice, the Pāla inscriptions speak of such revenue officers as *grāmapati* (head of the village) and *daśagrāmika* (head of ten villages), which latter term may be understood in the same sense as we find it in the law-book of Manu [4] In earlier times charges on land, which formed the primary source of revenue to the state, were directly collected by the agents of the state or by the *gāmabhojakas* or *gopas*, i e village headmen For this purpose Kautilya provided that a census should be taken of all the households, recording the number of their inmates and the amount of property owned by them,[5] so that the government could determine the amount of taxable property and obtain an estimate of the labour power it might requisition It seems that from the Gupta period the state shifted at least part of the burden of collecting taxes to the feudatories, which made it no longer necessary to maintain a record of households This can be inferred from the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims Writing in the beginning of the fifth century A D about the conditions in the Madhyadeśa, which lay in the heart of the Gupta empire, Fa-hsien observes 'They have not to register their households or attend to any magistrates and their rules '[6] This is an indication of the slackening of the Gupta central authority in taxation and executive administration We get similar information from Hsuan Tsang about the state of administration

[1]Ibid , 118–19
[2]VII, 115–20
[3]XIX, 44
[4]*History of Bengal*, I, 277
[5]*AŚ*, II, 35
[6]Samuel Beal *Travels of Fah-hian and Sung-Yun* Ch XVI, p xxxvii *Chinese Literature*, 1956, No 3, 154 gives the following translation They are unencumbered by any polltax or official restrictions '

in the first half of the seventh century A D To quote from him 'As the government is generous, official requirements are few Families are not registered '[1] Therefore the observation of the Chinese pilgrims that families were not registered can be explained by assuming that the state no longer bothered about the direct collection of taxes from the peasants, which function was probably taken over by intermediaries between the tillers of the soil and the government This may be taken as another presage of the feudalisation of the state apparatus

During the post-Gupta period there seems to have taken place a significant change in the payment of officers employed by the state If we rely on the authority of Kautilya, in the Maurya period all the officers of the state, except a few in the new settlements were paid in cash, the maximum salary being 48,000 *panas* and the minimum 60 *panas*, probably per month [2] All this is found in the section *bhrtyabharaniyam*, maintenance of servants, which prescribes the various scales of pay for all royal functionaries, high and low Many officers are named, and in several cases it is stated that similar functionaries should be paid similarly [3] However, some high priestly functionaries such as *rtvig ācārya* and *purohita*, who are recommended 48,000 *panas* as pay, are also considered worthy of *brahmadeya*[4] land in the new settlements Again, in the new settlements some other functionaries of middle rank such as elephant-trainers, physicians and horse-trainers, who are assigned 2000 (*panas*?) as pay, are recommended grant of land which they cannot sell or dispose of [5] Therefore except for some functionaries who are granted land in new settlements in addition to their regular remuneration in cash, all officers in the Kautilyan state are to be paid in cash The position seems to have changed in the early centuries of the Christian era The law-book of Manu, compiled probably in the second century, provides for the payment of fiscal officers by grants of land[6]—a provision which is repeated by the lawgivers of Gupta times In the fifth century Brhaspati, while defining *prasāda-likhita*, a writing of

[1]Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, i, 176
[2]*AŚ* V 3
[3]Ibid
[4]Ibid
[5]Ibid, II, 1
[6]VII 115–20

favour, states that such a grant is made by the king when, pleased with the services, valour etc of a person, he grants him a district or the like [1] We have no precise idea of the mode of payment to the officers under the Gupta empire, for the Chinese evidence on this point is not quite clear Legge's translation of a passage from Fa-hsien informs us that 'the king's body-guards and attendants, all have regular salaries' [2] But Beal translates the passage differently 'The chief officers of the king have all allotted revenues',[3] and recently a Chinese scholar has translated the crucial passage thus 'The king's attendants, guards, and retainers all receive emoluments and pensions '[4] If we accept the last rendering, it would appear that the term emoluments, having a wider context, might include grants At any rate it is clear that in the time of Harsavardhana high officers were not paid in cash for their services to the state, for one fourth of the royal revenues was earmarked for the endowment of great public servants [5] At one place Hsuan Tsang explicitly states that the governors, ministers, magistrates and officials had each a portion of land assigned to them for their personal support [6] These high officers, according to Harsa's inscriptions, would include *daussādhasādhanika*, *pramātāra*, *rājasthānīya*, *uparika* and *visayapati* [7] Thus under Harṣa revenues were granted not only to priests and scholars[8] but also to the officers of the state, a practice the existence of which is supported by the paucity of coins belonging to this period

Some inscriptions of the Gupta period show that villages were granted to secular parties, who administered them for religious purposes Under the Sātavāhanas and Kuṣānas cash endowments were made to the guilds of artisans for meeting religious needs, but under the Guptas land endowments were made to officials and others for the same purpose A very early instance is found in Central India in A D 496–97 in a grant made by the Uccakalpa

[1]Quoted in *Vyavahāramayūkha* (tr P V Kane and S G Patwardhan), pp 25–7

[2]*A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, p 5

[3]*Travels of Fah-hian*, p 55

[4]Ho Chang-chun, 'Fa-hsien's Pilgrimage to Buddhist Countries', *Chinese Literature*, 1956, no 3, 154

[5]Watters, op cit, I, 176

[6]S Beal (tr), *Si-Yu-Ki*, I, 88

[7]*EI*, II, 29, 1, 9

[8]*Si-Yu Ki*, I, 87

mahārāja Jayanātha [1] A village was granted as an *agrahāra* to a scribe (*divira*) and his son and two grandsons, who were to manage it for religious purposes [2] The inhabitants were asked to pay *bhāga' bhoga, kara, hiranya*, etc to the beneficiaries and to carry out their orders, but the donor retained the right of punishing the thieves [3] These concessions may not have been always utilised by the secular trustees in the interests of religion, and less so by the scribes whose oppressions were proverbial Whether the scribe was placed in charge of the endowment to supplement his remuneration for secular services is not clear, but in practice he may not have missed the opportunity of lining his pockets

In the same area several other similar grants were made by Śarvanātha, son of Jayanātha Thus in A D 512–13 Śarvanātha granted a village in four shares, two of which belonged to Visnunandin, another to the merchant Śaktināga, and another to Kumāranāga and Skandanāga [4] The village was given with *udranga* and *uparikara* and was not to be entered by the irregular or regular troops [5] —an important administrative immunity which does not occur in the grant mentioned above It is obvious that here the immediate beneficiaries were the secular parties, whose descendants were authorised to enjoy the grant in perpetuity [6] But the ultimate beneficiaries were the two gods for whose worship and for the repairs of whose shrines this grant was made with the agreement of the donor and the donee [7] At any rate it is clear that the fiscal and administrative rights were to be exercised by the secular beneficiaries, and only the proceeds were to be enjoyed by the temples A grant of a half of a village on similar terms was made by the same king to a person called Chodugomika, again a secular party, who agreed with the donor that the endowment would be utilised for the worship of the goddess Pistapurikādevī and the repairs of her temple [8] All these grants give the impression that secular parties functioned as managers of the villages which were to be enjoyed by the temples

[1] *CII*, III, 27
[2] Ibid, 11 5–11
[3] Ibid, 11, 11–14
[4] Ibid, 28, 11, 1–17
[5] Ibid, 11, 9–10
[6] Ibid, 11, 12–13
[7] Ibid, 11, 13–16
[8] Ibid, 29, 11, 1–12

But a writ of 533–34 made by the same king leaves no doubt that land grants were made even independently to secular parties According to it two villages were bestowed as mark of favour in perpetuity with the fiscal and administrative rights mentioned above upon a person called Pulindabhata,[1] who seems to have been an aboriginal chief, the term used here is not *śāsanī-krta* which is found in many religious charters but *prasādī-krtau* which appears in the secular charters of subsequent times In his turn the chief granted the two villages to Kumārasvāmin in perpetuity for the worship of Pistapurikādevī and for the repairs of her temple[2] Thus it is certain that before their transfer Pulindabhata held the two villages on the strength of a purely secular charter Other secular assignments may have been made in the Gupta period, but since they were not connected with religious donations they were not recorded on lasting material such as stone and copper

Inscriptions refer to secular assignees in the post-Gupta period The two copper-plate grants of Ashrafpur from East Bengal, roughly assignable to the seventh-eighth centuries,[3] mention quite a few They indicate that plots of land donated to the head of the Buddhist monastery were alienated from several persons who were enjoying them, as can be inferred from the terms *bhojyamāna*[4] or *bhujyamānaka* [5] In a few cases the same plot of land had been successively used by two parties and then transferred to the monastery of the Buddhist preceptor Samghamitra [6] All such persons are named, but their position and identity cannot be established However, in one instance land had been given to the queen,[7] maybe for maintenance, in another to a woman[8] for some service rendered to the king, and still in another to a *sāmanta*[9] for services rendered to the overlord Apparently these and other persons held the plots of land in question as some kind of service grants which were resumed either at the lapse of the term or on some other grounds, otherwise these could not have been so easily

[1]Ibid , 31, 11, 1–10
[2]Ibid , 11, 11–13
[3]*Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* I, 6, p 86
[4]Ibid , p 90, plate A, 1, 4
[5]Ibid , 11, 5–6
[6]Ibid , plate B, 11, 8–9
[7]Ibid , plate A, 1, 4
[8]Ibid , 11 4–5
[9]Ibid , 1 5

transferred Evidently no compensation was given to the parties who were deprived of their fiefs All this suggests that in the seventh or the eighth century in East Bengal some services were remunerated by means of land which was granted for a limited period

That religious services were remunerated by land grants and secular services by cash payments could not have been possible in the background of the existing economy, which, as will be shown later, was characterised by paucity of coins in post-Gupta times So long as coins were in considerable use under the Kuṣānas and Sātavāhanas even religious needs were met through cash payments, which continued to some extent under the Guptas But when they fell into comparative disuse both religious and secular services had to be paid by land grants The former practice is clearly supported by inscriptions But if priests and temples were maintained by land grants, how could have been officers maintained otherwise?

The problem of payment to officers in grants of revenues can be further examined in the light of the designations of the administrative officers and units of the Gupta period The titles *bhogika* and *bhogapatika* suggest that these officers were assigned offices not so much for exercising royal authority over the subjects and working for their welfare as for enjoying the revenues Sometimes the *bhogika* held the office of *amātya* also [1] We wonder whether in such a case the office of the *bhogika* was meant to remunerate its holder for his functions pertaining to the other office Further, the office of the *bhogika* was generally hereditary, for at least three generations of *bhogikas* are mentioned in several cases [2] All these factors must have naturally rendered the *bhogika* a powerful overlord, comparatively free from the control of the central authority The *bhogapatika* is mentioned as one of about a dozen officers stationed in Vardhamāna *bhukti*, when the *mahārāja* Vijayasena was ruling there as a vassal of the *mahārājādhirāja* Sri Gopacandra about A D 507 [3] It has been rightly suggested that this officer was probably a *jāgīrdār* [4] Some *bhogapatis* oppressed the rural communities The

[1] *CII*, III, 23, 11, 18–20, 26, 11, 22–3
[2] Ibid , 26, 11, 22–3
[3] *Sel Inscr* , p 360, 11, 3–4
[4] Ibid , p 360, fn 9

Harsacarita states that in course of the military march of Harsa villagers made false complaints against *bhogapatis* [1] Apparently in his anxiety to present the administration of his patron in a favourable light Bāṇa does not give credence to these complaints Another feudal functionary in the time of Harṣa was *mahābhogī*, not mentioned in contemporary inscriptions from north India but mentioned in some epigraphs from Orissa [2] In the *Kādambarī* Bāṇa's description of the *antahpura* in the palace of King Tārāpīḍa refers to the presence at the doorway (*dvāra-prakostha*) of hundreds of *mahābhogīs*,[3] who are taken by Agrawala as people living on the bounties of the state [4] We wonder whether these can be compared to the household retainers or warriors living in the houses of big vassals or kings in mediaeval Europe Probably bounties took the form of land revenue granted in the rural areas to the *mahābhogīs*, who occasionally flocked to the royal palace to pay homage to their liege-lord The early Kalacuri inscriptions introduce a new official *bhogikapālaka*,[5] who may have acted as superintendent over the *bhogikas* [6] In one case, towards the last quarter of the sixth century A D, the *bhogikapālaka* also appears as *mahāpīlupati* (head of the elephant force) [7] Whether he was given this post because of his services as *bhogikapālaka* or vice versa is not clear But all the same such terms as *bhogika, bhogapatika* and *bhogikapālaka* smack of feudal relations

The typical feudal idea that land or territory is meant for the enjoyment of those who hold it or govern it first comes into full view in the Gupta period Later Vedic texts declare that vaiśyas are meant to be fed upon by the rulers, while in post-Vedic times the Dharmasūtras state that śūdras are meant for serving the three higher varnas The view that territories are intended for the enjoyment of officers first appears in the inscriptions of Aśoka, under whom the *janapada* seems to have been divided into *āhāras*,[8] literally food meant for its holders and equivalent to a modern district or even subdivision The administrative unit

[1] p 212 This probably shows the bias of Baṇa against the peasants
[2] Binayak Misra, *Mediaeval Dynasties of Orissa*, pp 24–5, inscr no 1
[3] V S Agrawala, *Kādambarī*, p 103
[4] Ibid
[5] *CII*, IV, 13, 1, 4, 18, 1, 9
[6] Ibid, Introd, p cxli
[7] Ibid, 13, 1, 4
[8] Rūpnāth Minor Pillar Edict, Sārnāth Schism Pillar Edict

continued under the Sātavāhanas, and later in Gujarāt and Mahārāstra as known from the early Kalacuri inscriptions[1] of Gupta and post-Gupta times, when several other terms signifying enjoyment came to be used commonly for territorial divisions

It is suggested that the *bhogika* was possibly also connected with the *bhukti*,[2] but in the Bengal inscriptions the governor of the *bhukti* is called *uparika* The use of the term *bhukti*, which occurs in the sense of a territorial unit in the Gupta inscriptions, requires some explanation The term first appears in the Allahabad Stone Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta It is stated that the Kuṣāṇa rulers and those of Ceylon and the islands were allowed to retain possession of their *visayas* and *bhuktis* (dominions) on condition of paying homage and giving daughters in marriage [3] Afterwards *bhukti* recurs constantly in inscriptions in the sense of a large administrative unit Literally the term *bhukti* means something intended for enjoyment, for the idea of rulers enjoying the earth was fairly current during this period [4] So it is likely that as a territorial unit the *bhukti* may have been meant for the enjoyment of the governor under whose charge it was placed

The term *bhukti* can be compared with *bhoga*, a term of similar import In an inscription of Central India (eastern part) dated A D 508–9 the phrase *mahārāja-śarvanātha-bhoge*[5] clearly means the territory enjoyed by the *mahārāja* Sarvanātha In this context the term *bhoga* probably implies enjoyment of territory by the Gupta feudatory Śarvanātha under the normal authority of the emperor, but the term *bhukti* means enjoyment of territory under the emperor's direct and close control In the inscriptions dated in the Kalacuri era, however, the term *bhoga* indicates a somewhat smaller revenue area placed under the charge of a *bhogika*

In North India and Bengal the *bhukti* was divided into *visayas*, but if our interpretation of some phrases in the Dāmodarpur Copper-plate grants is accepted even the latter were meant for the enjoyment of district officers placed over them The phrase *anuvahamānake kotivarsavisaye* has been rendered as 'ever-prospering district' [6] But it would be more appropriate to take

[1] *CII*, IV, pp cxxiv–v
[2] *CII*, III, p 100, fn 2
[3] *Sel Inscr* , p 258, l, 24
[4] *ye bhuktā guptanāthairnna Sel Inscr* , p 394, verse 4
[5] *CII*, III, 24, 1, 4
[6] R G Basak, *EI*, XV, 131, fn 2

anuvah in the sense of carrying, which is supported by the comment to *Manu*, III 7 [1] Hence the term *anuvahamānake visaye* should be understood as a district bearing burdens, the nature of which is indicated by the use of the phrase *hasty-aśva-jana-bhogena*[2] which shows that the district contributed to the enjoyment of the governor either by supplying elephants, cavalry and infantry or by defraying the cost of their maintenance by the district governor [3] Thus it would appear that the *visaya* of Kotivarsa had to bear the burden of the enjoyment of its governor by maintaining his forces [4]

In the Maurya empire the *rājukas* or divisional heads were appointed by the emperor, but their counterparts in the Gupta empire, the *kumārāmātyas*, were appointed by the *uparika* A passage in an inscription of Kumāra Gupta (A D 448) has been taken as indicating a closer personal relation between the head of a district (*kumārāmātya*) in Bengal and the Gupta emperor, and it is suggested that the *kumārāmātya* of Pañcanagarī, who is described as *bhattāraka-pād-ānudhyātah* (devoted to the feet of the lord),[5] was appointed directly by Kumāra Gupta I [6] But the term *bhattāraka*[7] does not refer to Kumāra Gupta, for in all his three earlier Bengal inscriptions he is described as *paramabhattāraka* [8] This is also found in two other inscriptions in which the Gupta emperor Budha Gupta is described in exactly similar terms Therefore the crucial passage implies that the *kumārāmātya* of Pañcanagarī was devoted to his immediate lord, who may have been the head of the Puṇḍravardhana *bhukti*

It was only in the heart of the Gupta empire or in areas nearer their home that even the head of the *visaya* was appointed by the Gupta emperors, as we find in the case of Sarvanāga, *visayapati* of Antarvedi or the country lying between the Gangā and the

[1] Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s v *anuvah*

[2] *Sel Inscr* , p 338, 1, 3

[3] The rendering, 'the government of the infantry, cavalry and the elephants' (*EI*, XV, 144) does not represent the literal meaning, but may be accepted in a secondary sense

[4] *EI*, XV, 1, plate 4, ll 2–3

[5] *Sel Inscr* , Baigrām Copper-plate Inscription of G E 128 (p 342), l, I

[6] B C Sen, *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, p 211

[7] *Sel Inscr* , pp 280 and 285

[8] Ibid , p 324, l, I, *EI* XXIII, 8, ll, 10–11 (probably the inscription refers to Budha Gupta) Cf , *Sel Inscr* , p 403, l, 1

Yamunā,[1] but significantly enough here also the terms of the appointment of the district officer refer not to the administration or welfare of the subjects but to the enjoyment of his territory by the *visayapati* [2] Thus it would appear that, except in the areas in the heart of the empire, the Gupta emperor hardly enjoyed the direct allegiance of the district officers, who were devoted to their immediate lord rather than to their overlord

But it would be wrong to assume that the *uparika, kumārāmātya* and *visayapati* behaved as independent feudal barons Ordinarily several royal officials, in some cases as many as nine, were connected with land grants in villages [3] These grants mention higher and lower officers, but it is difficult to ascertain whether in all cases the designations of the officers are arranged in hierarchical order A Gujarāt inscription (A D 541) recording a grant of land by the *mahāsāmanta mahārāja* Sangamasimha conveys his order to his subordinates, who include *rājasthāniyas, uparikas, kumārāmātyas, cātas, bhatas* and others [4] The analogy of the Bengal inscriptions shows that the *uparika* was higher in status than the *visayapati* and *kumārāmātya* This shows that the order regarding grants was conveyed not only to high officials but also to their subordinates, which indicates that the ruler (in this case a feudatory) tried to make his authority felt even over the heads of the *visayas*, although these were appointed by the *uparika*

In course of time *amātya* and *kumārāmātya* became feudal titles So far as the *amātyas* are concerned this was certainly the position in the time of Harsa, for at least at two places the *Harsacarita* speaks of those *amātyas* who were anointed *murdh-ābhisiktāśc-āmātyā rājānah* [5] Agarwala seems to suggest that the term *amātya* here should be taken in the sense of companion or *sakhā*[6] and not in the sense of *mantrin* But it would be better to take it in the sense of a high rank of honour or distinction Agarwala adds that those who were attached to the prince were known as *kumārāmātya* [7] The office may have originated in this manner, but

[1] *CII*, III, 16, ll, 3–4

[2] *antarvvedyām bhog-abhivrddhaye varttamāne* Ibid , ll, 4–5

[3] *CII*, IV, 7, ll, 2–4

[4] Ibid , 11, ll 1–3

[5] *srutābhijanaśīlasalino murdh-abhisiktā-sc-āmātyā-rājānah, HC*, p 173 Crowned princes are represented as *amātya* according to Agrawala, *Harsacarita*, p 112

[6] *HC*, p 112

[7] Ibid

later it became an independent position without having anything to do with the prince It seems that the *kumārāmātya* was lower in rank than the *amātya* The fact that the *mantrin, senāpati, mahādandanāyaka, viṣayapati* and other high administrative functionaries of Gupta times held the title of *kumārāmātya* is taken to suggest that it provided a cadre of officers, like the *amātyas* of the *Arthaśāstra*, from which all the high-ranking officers were recruited But it would better explain things if the *kumārāmātyas* were taken as a feudal rank of honour conferred on high functionaries, including even a *mahārāja* [1] Whether the title carried some fiscal or other privileges is not clear But towards the end of the reign of the Imperial Guptas we find the *kumārāmātya mahārāja* Nandana making a land grant without the permission of the overlord, which suggests that by the middle of the sixth century A D the *kumārāmātyas* had emerged as *de facto* lords of villages which they could give away

The growing hereditary character of the divisional and district officers, from the Gupta period onwards, undermined central authority and tended to feudalise the administration further Although Kautilya lays down that officials (*amātyas*) and soldiers should be hereditary, we have hardly any contemporary epigraphic evidence to support this But the inscriptions of the Gupta period show that the posts of the *mantrin* and the *saciva*, who served with the Gupta emperor, were hereditary,[2] so was the post of the *amātya* in Central India[3] and Vaiśālī[4] In one case in Central India we find five generations of office-holders in one family, of whom the first was *amātya*, the second *amātya* and *bhogika*, the third *bhogika*, and the fourth and the fifth *mahāsāndhivigrahika* [5] The same region also furnishes other instances of two[6] and sometimes three[7] generations of *bhogikas* Further, the surname *datta* of the *uparikas* in charge of the *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana[8] suggests that they probably belonged to the same family Theoretically the emperor enjoyed the power of dismissing his officials,

[1] *JASB*, NS V (1909), 164

[2] *Sel Inscr*, pp 282–3, ll 6–7, *CII*, III, 6, ll 3–4

[3] *CII*, III, 22, ll 28–30

[4] Dikshitar, *The Gupta Polity*, pp 149–50

[5] *CII*, III, 22, ll, 28–30, 23, ll 18–20

[6] Ibid, 27, ll 21–2

[7] Ibid, 26, ll 22–3

[8] *Sel Inscr*, p 284, l 3, p 324, l 2, p 328, l 2

but in practice they and their descendants continued to be in office because of their local strength They further gained in power and influence because of the practice of combining several offices in the same person

From the seventh century A D onwards officials began to be invested with pompous, feudal titles Bhāskarvarman's treasurer (*bhāndāgārādhikrt*) Divākara-Prabha held the title of *mahāsāmanta* [1] Similarly the officers of Harsavardhana were designated as *mahāsāmanta* What is more important, the pompous epithet, acquirer of the *pañcamahāśabda*, came to be applied to the officials and vassals in this period In Eastern India this epithet was conferred on some high functionaries of the state The chief executor of a grant of Bhāskaravarman was known as *prāpta-pañcamahāśabda* [2] In Western India the early Gurjara king Dadda II held this title[3] and passed it on to the Sendrakas in the third quarter of the seventh century [4]

The Rāstrakūta chief Nannarāja, a direct collateral ancestor of Dantidurga, claims in his grant of 631–32 that unlike his ancestors he was a ruler entitled to the dignity of the *pañcamahāśabda*, which he had personally won [5] This implies that only certain remarkable services rendered by the vassal to his overlord enabled him to earn this privilege According to the *Mānasollāsa*, a text of the twelfth century, this privilege signified the use of five musical instruments,[6] which are referred to by a Jain writer Ravakotyācārya and enumerated by a Lingāyat writer as *śrnga* (horn), *tammata*, *śankha* (conch), *bherī* (drum), and *jayaghantā* (bell of victory) [7] This was possibly at first a prerogative of the paramount power, but later extended to vassals

It is striking to note that during the Gupta period village headmen appointed by the king were becoming semi-feudal officers primarily concerned with their own gains What was done in the Maurya period by the superintendent of agriculture in the interests of the state was now done by the village headman

[1] R B Pandey, *Historical and Literary Inscriptions*, 56, l 50
[2] Ibid, ll 47–8
[3] *CII*, IV, 16, l 31
[4] *EI*, XXVIII, 34, plate A, ll 11–12, plate B, l 16
[5] Altekar, *The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their Times*, p 7
[6] III verse 1336
[7] *IA*, XII, 96

(*grām-ādhipati-āyuktaka*) for filling his own granary [1] The *āyuktaka*, who seems to be mentioned as a village official in some Central Indian inscriptions of the early fifth century A D,[2] lived upon a share of the agricultural produce of the village people,[3] probably sending the major portion thus realised to the king What is remarkable is that he could impose forced labour on peasant women to serve his own needs,[4] and not for the sake of the ruler, as was the case in earlier times

During the Gupta period there arose a new type of village which served as the resort of royal favourites It is stated in a Purāna text that such a village was mostly inhabited by wicked and powerful people who, not owning any fields themselves, lived upon the fields of others [5] The class of royal favourites, who formed a group of intermediaries, seems to have been an important concomitant of feudal development on the political side

The process of conquest, by which smaller chiefs were reduced to subordination and reinstated in their positions provided they paid regular tributes and did homage, contributed in large measure to the growth of feudal relations It reached its culmination with Samudra Gupta, whose whirlwind conquests of vast areas led to the establishment of such relations on a much wider scale and provided a pattern for his successors During the sixth century A D the term used for conquered feudatories was *sāmanta* It is evident from its use in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the inscriptions of Aśoka[6] that in the Maurya period this term meant independent neighbours In post-Maurya law-books it was used in the sense of a neighbouring proprietor of land,[7] and not in the sense of a feudal lord as has been made out in a recent work [8] Similarly there is no evidence for the view that Manu (VII 136 and 9) provides for the collection of the share of produce,

[1] *Kāma S*, V 5 5

[2] *CII*, IV, 6, l 2 (only the *āyuktaka* is mentioned in connection with a land grant), 7, ll 2–4

[3] *Kāma S*, V 5 5

[4] Ibid

[5] *Mārkandeya P*, 49 49 M N Dutt s tr of this passage seems to be better than that of Pargiter

[6] *AŚ*, I, 6, R E, II, 1, 5

[7] *Manu* (SBE), VIII, 286–9, *Yaj*, II 152–3

[8] B N Dutt, *Hindu Law of Inheritance*, p 27

taxes, fines, etc , by the *sāmantas* (estate-owners) and not by the 'king' or ruler of the country [1]

It seems that as early as the third quarter of the fifth century A D the term *sāmanta* was used in the sense of vassal in South India, for the phrase *sāmanta-cūdāmanayah* appears in a Pallava inscription of the time of Śāntivarman (*c* A D 455–70) [2] In the last quarter of the same century the term occurs in some grants of Southern and Western India in the sense of vassal [3] In North India the earliest uses of the term in a similar sense seem to have been in a Bengal inscription, and in the Barabar Hill Cave Inscription of the Maukhari chief Anantavarman, in which his father is described as *sāmanta-cūdāmanih* ('the best among feudatories') [4] Paleographically this inscription is placed earlier than A D 554, the date of the Harhā Inscription,[5] and hence the date of Anantavarman's father may be put round about A D 500, when the Maukharis were the *sāmantas* of the Imperial Guptas The next important mention of the term *sāmanta* is found in the Mandasor Stone Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman (*c* A D 525–35), in which he claims to have subjugated the *sāmantas* (feudatories) in the whole of Northern India [6] During the sixth century A D the rulers of Valabhī bore the title of *sāmanta-mahārāja* and *mahāsāmanta* Gradually the application of the term *sāmanta* was extended from defeated chiefs to royal officials Thus, in the inscriptions dated in the Kalacuri-Cedi era, from A D 597 onwards *rājās* and *sāmantas* took the place of *uparikas* and *kumārāmātyas* [7] Later, in the land grants of Harsavardhana the terms *sāmanta-mahārāja* and *mahāsāmanta* appear as the titles of great imperial officers [8]

The term *sāmanta* is not used for the feudatories of Samudra Gupta, but their obligations are clearly set forth in the Allahabad Inscription, which shows that in return for being reinstated in their thrones the conquered and subjugated princes were expected to pay all tributes, to carry out royal orders, to give their

[1] Pran Nath, *Economic Conditions in Ancient India*, p 160

[2] R B Pandey, *Historical and Literary Inscriptions*, no 29, 1 31

[3] These instances have been collected by L Gopal, in 'Sāmanta—Its Varying Significance in Ancient India', *JRAS*, Pts 1 & 2, April 1963

[4] *CII*, III, 49, 1 4

[5] R G Basak, *The History of N E India*, p 105

[6] *Sel Inscr*, p 394, verse 5

[7] *CII*, IV, introd , p cxli

[8] *EI*, I, 67f, IV, 208

daughters in marriage, and to render homage to the conqueror [1] Bāṇa, the first writer to indicate the obligations of the *sāmantas*, in his *Harsacarita* provides a kind of gloss on the precious little extracted from the inscription of Samudra Gupta We learn that Puṣpabhūti had made his *mahāsāmantas* as his tributaries (*karada*) [2] In the areas administered by the *sāmantas* the emperor realised annual taxes from them and not from the subjects [3] Whether the vassals were free to increase the taxes or to impose fresh ones is not clear, but they were held accountable for royal taxes in the areas held by them

The *Kādambarī* mentions five modes of saluting the king (*pranām-āgamana*) by the defeated kings, who were certainly reduced to the position of *sāmantas* These included salute by bowing the head, bowing the head and touching the feet of the emperor, bowing the head and touching the palm of the feet of the emperor (described as taking the dust from the feet of the emperor by the defeated *sāmanta* on his head in the *Harsacarita*), and finally placing the head on the earth near the feet of the emperor [4]

The obligation of the *sāmantas* to pay yearly tributes to the emperor is evident Their second obligation, to pay homage to the emperor in person, is graphically described by Bāṇa He tells us how the defeated *mahāsāmantas* greeted the conqueror by removing their crowns and headdresses (*śekhara* and *mauli*) They were subjected to various kinds of humiliation in the court of Harsa Some served as bearers of fans, others prayed for life by tying a sword to their neck, and still others, deprived of all their possessions, were always eager to salute the emperor with folded hands and allowed their beard to grow till their fate was finally decided by the conqueror [5]

Defeated kings, apparently reduced to the position of the *sāmantas*, were made to render three kinds of services to king in the court They held *chowries* as the conquered hostile vassal-chiefs did in the court of Harsa [6] They served as door-keeper in

[1] *LI*, 22–4
[2] *karadīkrta mahāsāmanta HC*, p 100
[3] Agrawala, *Harsacarita*, p 217
[4] Agrawala, *Kādambarī*, p 128 According to Agrawala nos IV and V are covered by the term *Śekhari-bhavantu pāda-rajā-rajāmsi* (p 128)
[5] *HC*, p 60
[6] Ibid

the court by holding a rod of cane in the hand,[1] and they served as reciters of auspicous words uttering 'success' (*jaya*) [2] These three modes of serving by the defeated kings (*pancāriki-karana*) are enumerated by Bāna in the *Kādambarī* [3] What appears to be a humiliation was considered a privilege by them They made repeated inquiries with the gate-keeper about the possibility of getting an audience with the emperor [4]

The obligation of presenting daughters to the conqueror is known from the Allahabad Inscription but not from Bāṇa, according to whom the defeated *sāmantas* furnished their minor princes or sons to the conqueror [5] Probably these were to be trained in the imperial traditions, so that they might grow loyal to their overlord On the other hand on the occassion of the installation of Yaśovatī as chief queen the wives of noble *sāmantas* consecrated her with water from golden pitchers and thus offered her their services [6] This, however, appears as an obligation to be carried out in times of peace But, by and large, the obligations of the vassals known from Bāna relate to the defeated chiefs called *śatru-mahāsāmanta*, required to serve the conqueror in various ways in consequence of their defeat

Whether the *sāmantas* had any administrative or judicial functions to perform in times of peace is stated neither in the law-books nor in the *Harsacarita* However, we learn that on the advice of the *pradhāna* (chief) *sāmantas*, whose voice could not be disregarded, Rājyavardhana took food[7] when he was afflicted with grief on the loss of his sister Rājyaśrī If the counsel of the vassals could not be ignored in personal matters, how could it be on administrative matters which required their help and cooperation?

Some *sāmantas* made religious grants without reference to their overlord One of the earliest examples is the Vappaghosavata grant of Jayanāga, who ruled in the latter half of the sixth century with his headquarters at Karnasuvarnaka in the District of Murshidabad [8] It states that (his) *sāmanta*, Nārāyanabhadra, who was

[1] *HC*, p 194
[2] Agrawala, *Kādambari*, pp 127–8
[3] Ibid
[4] *HC*, p 60
[5] Ibid, p 45
[6] Ibid, p 167
[7] Ibid, p 178
[8] *EI*, XVIII, 60–2

enjoying the Audumbarika District, asked the *mahāpratīhara* Sūryasena to convey his order granting the village Vappaghoṣavāta to Bhaṭṭa Brahmavīrasvāmin,[1] which was done through a copper-plate charter [2] The practice was not confined to Eastern India In the first half of the seventh century A D [3] the *sāmanta* Indrarāja granted a village to a brāhmana in Madhya Pradesh,[4] apparently without reference to his overlord who is not mentioned by him

It seems that the *sāmantas* living in the court had to carry out certain social obligations They took part in the various amusements such as gambling, dice-playing, playing on the flute, drawing portraits of the king, solving puzzles, etc [5] Similarly their wives also had to attend the court on festive occasions [6] Thus the vassals were linked with the lord not only militarily and administratively but also socially

Bāṇa speaks of *sāmanta, mahāsāmanta, āptasāmanta, pradhānasāmanta, śatru-mahāsāmanta*, and *pratisāmanta* Of these the *mahāsāmanta* was obviously a step higher than the *sāmanta*, and the *śatru-mahāsāmanta* was a conquered enemy chief *Āptasāmantas*[7] were probably those who willingly accepted the vassalage of the overlord *Pradhānasāmantas* were the most trusted hands of the emperor, who never disregarded their advice, but it is difficult to make anything out of the term *pratisāmanta*,[8] probably he was a vassal opposed to the king or merely a hostile vassal In any case it is clear that the usage of the term *sāmanta* was well established and there were as many as half a dozen kinds of vassals

The princes, no better than vassals, were divided into three categories (i) the *śatru-mahāsāmantas* who rendered various services to the emperor and were treated with respect (ii) the *mahīpālas* who were forced to submit to the prestige (*pratāpa*) of the emperor and (iii) those who were attracted to him out of their admiration and affection (*anurāga*) for him [9] At one place Bāna

[1] Ibid , 7, ll 1–7
[2] Ibid , ll 7–14
[3] *EI*, XXXIII, 209
[4] Ibid , 41, ll 7–15
[5] Agrawala, *Kādambarī*, p 100
[6] *HC*, p 143
[7] Ibid , p 155
[8] *pratisāmanta-cakṣuṣam-iva nanāsa nidrā kumudavanānām*, *HC*, p 219
[9] Ibid , p 60, cf , Agrawala, *Harsacarita*, p 43

refers to *anurakta mahāsāmantas*, which might suggest that there were especially attached to their overlord

Normally an important duty of these *rajas* and *sāmantas* was to render military aid to their overlord The description of the march of Harsa shows that the army is made up of the troops—men and horse—supplied by the *rājās*, and their number is so huge that Harsa is amazed at the sight of the concourse [1] Even discounting an element of exaggeration in the number of Harsa's army as recorded by Hsusan Tsang, this is so huge that the contrast between his army and that of the Mauryas is quite evident It would be too much to expect that, with diminished resources, over which Harsa's government did not exercise the same amount of control as the Mauryas, he would be able to maintain such a vast army, apparently not essential for the day-to-day defence of a kingdom much smaller in extent The only probable explanation seems to be that this was a feudal militia which was mustered only in times of war This hypothesis is borne out by the Aihole Inscription, composed in praise of his valiant adversary Pulakeśin, which describes Harsa as equipped with the hosts supplied by his vassals [2] It is obvious that the practice of supplying troops to the lord made him dependent on his feudatories

It is not clear whether the *sāmantas* were bound to Harsa by grants of the revenues of villages But this was exactly the relation between the emperor and the *āgrahārikas*, who, however, seem to have owed no obligation to their benefactor Some *agrahārikas* on their own initiative came out of their villages to welcome Harsa with curd, raw sugar (*guda*), and sugar in closed cases, and the *daṇḍadharīs* scared them away by means of threats and chidings [3] But in general probably the grantees did nothing more than wish Harṣa well in his expedition by getting pitchers lifted in the hands of the village elders (*mahattaras*) [4]

Our discussion of the duties of the *sāmantas* and similar other dignitaries should not lead us to think that these are precisely defined in any law-book or theoretical text of Gupta or post-

[1] *HC*, pp 209–10

[2] *sāmantasena-mukuṭamaṇi-mayūkh-ākrānta-pād-āravindah*, verse 23

[3] *HC*, p 212

[4] Ibid

Gupta times, but they are clearly reflected in some contemporary literary works

Central authority was further undermined by the loss of royal monopoly over the possession of horses and elephants, especially the latter In the pre-Maurya period elephants seem to have been ordinarily owned by the king, for in a Jātaka story an elephant is given as a reward by a king to the thirty families forming a village [1] Where power lay in the hands of more than one man, every member of the ruling class had to supply an elephant to the state, this was the case with the 5000-strong aristocratic state on the Beas [2] We learn from Megasthenes that in the Maurya period no private person was allowed to keep either a horse or an elephant, for these animals were held to be the special property of the king [3] Quoting from Megasthenes Strabo states that royal stables were provided for horses and elephants and a royal magazine for arms, because the soldier had to return his arms to the magazine and his elephant to the stables [4] The number of horses and elephants possessed by the king was considerable, for Kautilya provides for the posts of superintendent of horses and elephants [5] Thus in the pre-Maurya and Maurya-periods horses and elephants do not seem to have been owned by private individuals The old tradition of elephants being the exclusive possession of the king is recorded in the *Raghuvamsa*, in which, along with other things, elephants from the forests are said to constitute the wages of the king for protecting the earth [6] But in fact from the post-Maurya period onwards the position began to change The *Milinda-pañha* states that the best of elephants, horses, etc , belong to the king,[7] which shows that royal possession was limited only to the elephants of the best quality This monopoly was further undermined in the Gupta period Nārada lays down that owners of elephants and horses should not pay any fine for mischief caused by these animals, for they are looked

[1]*Jat* I, 200

[2]Strabo, XV 37, McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature*, p 45

[3]Strabo, XV 41–43, McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p 90

[4]Strabo, XV 52, McCrindle, Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature, p 55

[5]*AS*, II 30–2

[6]XVII 66

[7]Ed V Trenckner, p 192

upon as protectors of the king's subjects [1] This signifies that horses and elephants were owned by private individuals, although superintendents of these animals are mentioned as important functionaries in the law-book of Brhaspati,[2] and also in contemporary inscriptions We further learn that the possession of horses and elephants by the high functionaries of the state was considered a menace to royal power Thus the *Kāmandaka Nitisāra*, a post-Gupta text, provides that information should be kept about the elephants and horses of the *mahāmātra* (superior officer) and the *purohita* (chief priest) [3] While in the interests of the ruler vigil was to be maintained over the military strength of the high functionaries, in relation to the subjects they were allowed an amount of latitude which they did not enjoy before Gautama, a law-book which is pre-Maurya in its essentials, imposes a fine on the owner whose horse causes damage [4] But in such a case Nārada exempts the owners of elephants and horses on the ground that they are protectors of the subjects [5] Another passage of the same text, however, implies that the owner of a horse is liable to punishment for the offence committed by the animal if it has been deliberately set to do it [6] So it would appear that in the Gupta period owners of elephants and horses, who were probably local chiefs, were regarded as natural protectors of the people, a function which was formerly discharged by regularly appointed officers of the state

The number of elephants possessed by chiefs and princes seems to have determined their relative status According to a Chinese account of A D 727 the Central Indian king possessed 900 elephants, and the big chiefs possessed 200 to 300 elephants [7] In between we find the princes of middle rank Thus the king of South India owned 800 elephants, that of West India 500–600 elephants, and that of North India 300 elephants [8]

In India the need for protection did not lead to any consider-

[1]XI 32 cf, 30

[2]*Samskāra Kanda*, p 301 verse 305

[3]*KNS*, XII 44

[4]Ed A F Stenzler, XII 24

[5]XI 32

[6]*Nār*, XV XVI 32

[7]Jan Yun-hua, 'Hui-Ch ao and his work A Reassessment, *The Indo Asian Culture*, XII, 184

[8]Ibid

able practice of commendation, which was so common in Europe on account of the anarchical conditions created by barbarian invasions Nevertheless, the law-book of Viṣṇu, a work of about the third century A D, states that, in order to obtain wealth and security, the householder should apply to a lord [1] But actual examples of commendation are very few According to an inscription of about the eighth century A D, from the District of Hazaribagh, Bihar, the people of three villages commended themselves to a merchant prince who offered them protection by meeting on their behalf a demand made by their king for *avalagana* [2] With the king's approval they requested the merchant to become their *rājā*, and he readily agreed to do so [3] It is held that the term *avalagā* or *olaga* is of Kannada origin and means military service to or attendance on one's lord [4] We may add that since the Karnātas are mentioned as serving in the army of the Pālas from the eighth century A D onwards, they may have introduced this word in the north But we are not sure whether the term *avalagana* used in this inscription carries the meaning proposed above According to this record Ādisiṃha, the king of Magadha, demands *avalagana* [5] from three villages, which obviously means royal dues in cash and kind, and not some kind of feudal service rendered by the tenant to his lord or by the lord to his overlord Of course when the merchant Udayamāna undertakes to pay *avalagana* on behalf of the villages and the king installs him as the *rājā* of three villages,[6] it implies a kind of feudal contract between the overlord and his vassal similar to that which we find in Europe Further, when Udayamāna makes over one of the villages to his younger brother who is made a kind of sub-rājā,[7] it clearly illustrates secular subinfeudation Whatever might be the meaning of the term *avalagana*, which does not appear in any early mediaeval land grant but in two Prākrt texts of the eighth century and again in the texts of the twelfth, fourteenth or even

[1] *atha yogakṣem-ārtham-īsvaram-adhigacchet* LXIII 1
[2] *EI*, II, 27, ll 6–7
[3] Ibid, ll 1–10
[4] *Summaries of Papers*, Silver Jubilee Session of the Indian History Congress (Poona, 1963), p 15
[5] *EI*, II, 27, l 7
[6] Ibid, ll 7–8
[7] Ibid, ll 9–11

sixteenth century,[1] the inscription in question certainly exemplifies the feudal practices of commendation and subinfeudation, leading to the weakening of central authority

There is another important indication that central authority was growing weaker and local lords stronger Nārada lays down that those who oppose the king and prevent the payment of taxes should be dealt with by similar people[2] Although the theory of 'divide and rule' is very old, the advice that disorderly elements should be used one against the other suggests that officials under the direct control of the state were incapable of dealing with certain powerful individuals who, in all probability, approximated to the status of feudal intermediaries

The economic developments which created conditions for the origin of feudalism are rather difficult to determine In this connection it has to be considered whether land granted to the brāhmanas and temples was cultivated or uncultivated, and whether such beneficiaries or other landowners were the actual tillers of the soil or got their fields cultivated by temporary peasants A Sātavāhana inscription from the Western Deccan of A D 130 grants a part of the royal land to some Buddhist monks, and states that if the land is not cultivated the village is not to be settled[3] This clearly shows that at least from the second century A D villages which were given away possessed cultivated lands In the Iksvāku inscriptions of the Krishna-Guntur area in Andhra Pradesh, of the second half of the third century A D, the ruler is referred to as the giver of hundreds and thousands of *hala* (as much land as can be cultivated by one plough) measures[4] The use of *hala* as a measure of land by the Iksvāku rulers definitely shows that plough cultivation was well known to the people of Andhra from the beginning of the third century A D Although we are not in a position to ascertain the nature of the villages granted to the brāhmanas as gifts for sacrifices in the Western Deccan during the first century B C,[5] it is evident that such villages granted in the second and third centuries of the Christian era were cultivated

[1] An article on *avalagana* by Dasharatha Sharma submitted to the Poona Session (1963) of the Indian History Congress

[2] *Nār*, X 4, 5 and 7

[3] *ta ca kheta (na) kasate sa ca gamo na vasati*, *Sel. Inscr*, p 194, ll 3–4

[4] Ibid pp 219–20, ll 4–5, p 222, l 4, p 227, l 1, p 229, ll 3–4, p 230, l 6

[5] Ibid, p 187, ll 10–11

The use of the terms *khila* and *aprahata* in the Gupta land grants of North and Eastern Bengal has been interpreted as meaning that waste and uncultivated lands were given to the brāhmanas, but this interpretation does not suit all cases For instance, in the Baigram Copper-plate inscription of A D 448 the term *khila-ksetra*[1] cannot be taken in the sense of uncultivated and waste land First, in the contemporary law-book of Nārada the term *khila* is defined as a tract of land which has not been under cultivation for three years [2] Secondly, in the above-mentioned grant the *khila-ksetra* is accompanied by some homestead land for a class of persons serving the temples,[3] which suggests that it was not entirely waste land Similarly, in the Dāmodarpur Copper-plate inscription of A D 543 the phrases *aprahata* and *khila*[4] seem to have been used in a conventional sense, for in this case land is so scarce that five *kulyavāpas* of land have to be purchased at three places [5] Besides, here also untilled (*aprahata*) and fallow (*khila*) land is accompanied by homestead land (*vāstu*),[6] which makes it doubtful whether the land was waste And finally, the land in question is not always described as *aprahata*, for at one place the whole area of five *kulyavāpas* is defined as *khila* [7] We learn from another Dāmodarpur land grant of the last quarter of the fifth century A D that four *kulyavāpas* of land meant for a gift to a god called Kokāmukhasvāmin and seven *kulyavāpas* to Śvetavarāhasvāmin, both purchased by a merchant, were cultivated areas beyond any doubt [8]

The grants of land to temples and brāhmaṇas in the eastern part of modern Madhya Pradesh, in the dominions of the Parivrājaka feudatories of the Guptas, differed from those made in Bengal in two important respects The Bengal grants, which were the results of sale transactions effected by individuals, transferred plots of land, while the Central India grants, which were made by feudatories, gave away villages The Bengal grants, which were made with the sanction of the officers of the central government, carried immunity from taxes only, but the Central

[1]Ibid, p 343, 11 6–7
[2]XI 26
[3]*Sel Inscr*, p 343, 1 9 and fn 9
[4]Ibid, p 338, 11, 6–7
[5]Ibid, p 338
[6]Ibid, 11 15–18
[7]Ibid, 11 17–18
[8]Ibid, p 328, 11 5–7

India grants provided administrative immunities as well Nevertheless, as in the case of the Bengal grants, in Central India also terms denoting uncultivated land were used in a conventional sense Although several grants in Central India were made 'according to the maxim of the fallow land' (*bhūmicchidranyāya*), there is hardly any other indication to show that the villages were not cultivated and settled In most cases the term *bhūmicchidranyāya* served as a legal fiction Thus two villages, which were granted according to this maxim to the brāhmaṇas for carrying on the worship of the goddess Pistapurikā-devi and repairing a temple, were clearly settled [1] They were inhabited by brāhmaṇas and others, to whom the order regarding the grant was conveyed [2] Further, these villages had been bestowed earlier, as a mark of favour, upon Pulindabhata (evidently a brāhmana), who in his turn granted these to another priest Kumārasvamin,[3] for which act he obtained the sanction of the *mahārāja* Śarvanātha Incidently this also shows the process of subinfeudation

Similarly in the inscriptions dated in the Kalacuri-Cedi era, found in Gujarāt and Mahārāstra and dating from the fifth to the seventh century A D, the term *bhūmicchidra* is apparently used in the grants of those villages and plots of lands which were settled and cultivated [4] Of all these nine cases only three refer to grants of plots of land, the remainder six dealing with grants of villages It is significant that, in the earliest inscription (early decades of the fifth century A D) belonging to this group, the order of the *mahārāja* Subandhu regarding the grant of a village is conveyed to its inhabitants,[5] although the village is granted according to the *bhūmicchidranyāya* If settled villages were granted according to this maxim even in the early part of the fifth century A D, the mention of *bhūmicchidranyāya* in the grants of the sixth and seventh centuries may have been a mere formality Thus in a *bhūmicchidranyāya* grant of A D 642 from Gujarāt land seems to have been granted with a farm-house (*sasībaram*),[6] which shows that it was cultivated land In another case the settled character of

[1] *CII*, III, 31, ll 7–11, 13

[2] Ibid, l 7

[3] Ibid, ll, 10–12

[4] *CII*, IV, no 7, l 9, 11, l 10, 14, l 20, 15, l 21, 16, l 34, 17, l 34, 19, l 15, 20, l 13, 21, l 29

[5] *grāma-prativāsinah* *CII*, IV, 7, ll 3–4

[6] Ibid, 20, ll 12–13 and p 80, fn 10

the granted land is very evident, for the 'fallow' land was granted along with irrigation facilities [1]

The usual phraseology in almost all such grants is that villages and plots of land were granted together with *udranga* and *uparikara*, inclusive of all dues and exempt from all gifts, forced labour and special rights, and not to be entered by *cātas* and *bhatas*, which again suggests that these were settled areas In several cases the donees were also entitled to the receipt of fines realised from those who were convicted of ten offences The long list of taxes and imposts from which the donees are granted exemption hardly allows us to presume that these villages were virgin land In this context the term *avanirandhranyāya*, the equivalent of *bhūmicchidranyāya*, also appears as a legal fiction Thus in Mahārāstra a village was granted according to the maxim of *avanirandhra* in A D 572, but it was declared free from the obligation of gifts, forced labour, cess for providing meals to royal officers on tour, and all taxes, and was invested with the powers of adjusting local disputes,[2] which makes it likely that it was a settled village

Therefore we must be very careful in interpreting such terms as *khila, aprahata, bhūmicchidra* and *avanirandhra* used in the land grants of the fifth to the seventh century A D Just as the grandiloquent titles of the kings in the inscriptions are not necessarily a measure of their exploits, so also such descriptions of land do not always indicate its real character More often than not these are rather in keeping with the form than with the substance

In some cases the order regarding the grant of a village to the brāhamanas is conveyed to the brāhmaṇa and other inhabitants of that village,[3] which shows that the brāhmanas are not introduced into the village for the first time Most land grants, especially those dated in the first four centuries of the Kalacuri-Cedi era, do not furnish any information about the original residence of the brāhmana donees, although their *gotra* is frequently described as Bhāradvāja But, where their place of residence is mentioned, it does not seem to be far away from the site of the land granted to them Thus we have many instances of granting cultivated land which may be compared to feudal

[1]These were provided by means of *vapi, kūpa* and *taḍāka CII*, IV, 21 1, 28
[2]Ibid , 120, 11 18–20
[3]*CII*, III, 31, 1 7

practices in mediaeval Europe, with the difference that in Gupta and post-Gupta India the recipients mostly belonged to the priestly order and were small in number

It has been suggested that the practice of granting land in Bengal extended the area under cultivation and rural settlement,[1] a point which has been stressed by Kosambi, in relation to other parts of India [2] During Gupta and post-Gupta times this seems to have been true of some areas in northern and eastern Bengal, but generally in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarāt and Mahārāstra settled villages and cultivated plots of land were the objects of gifts Grants to pioneering brāhmanas probably began in the pre-Maurya period, when sometimes parts of the royal domain were granted to the brāhmanas in Magadha and Kosala,[3] and they continued in the Maurya period, when areas of land free from taxes and punishments were set apart for certain sections of brāhmanas,[4] in the later case it is clear that the grant was meant to extend the area of land under cultivation, for the relevant provision in the *Arthaśāstra* is a part of the plan of founding new settlements [5] The process continued in subsequent times

Land grants played an important part in the colonisation of new areas in Gupta and post-Gupta periods For pre-Maurya and especially Maurya times we have some literary evidence, and the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya recommends large-scale reclamation of virgin land partly through land grants But the epigraphs seem to suggest the process from the beginning of the Christian era From the Gupta period onwards deliberate attempts were made to extend the arable land by means of grants It was realised that barren tracts could be of no use to the owners unless these were made cultivable, and so grants were made to priests and temples with the object of bringing such lands under cultivation According to an inscription of Samācāradeva from Bengal, assignable to the second half of the sixth century A D,[6] when a brāhmana approached the elders of a district for a piece of land, they decided to grant it on the ground that it was full of pits and

[1] P C Chakravarti, *Hist of Bengal*, I, 648–9
[2] *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp 291–6
[3] *DN*, I, 87, 111, 114, 127, 131 and 224
[4] *AŚ*, II 1
[5] Ibid
[6] *EI*, XVIII, 75

infested with beasts and hence was of no spiritual or material benefit to the king, they thought that if it was rendered capable of being enjoyed by the beneficiary it could bear both religious and economic fruits to the king [1] Such intentions are not set forth in other charters, but the results of making over virgin lands to the grantees can be easily visualised

The Tippera Copper-plate grant of lord Lokanātha (A D 650) provides an important indication of a policy of reclaiming forest areas for cultivation in Eastern India Lokanātha made an endowment of land in the forest region to more than one hundred brāhmanas, who were given joint and individual shares [2] The boundaries of the land so granted were not defined, apparently because they had not been settled, only the limits of the district Suvvaṅga in which the forest region was situated were demarcated [3] The forest area containing the endowed land is described as 'having no distinction of natural and artificial, having a thick network of bush and creepers, where deer, buffaloes, bears, tigers, serpents, etc , enjoy, according to their will, all pleasures of home-life' [4] Obviously the brāhmana community was brought there for the worship of the god Bhagavān Ananta-Nārāyana installed in the *matha* made by a high-ranking feudatory brāhmana, the *mahāsāmanta* Pradosaśarman,[5] at whose intercession the grant seems to have been made But the real significance of their advent lay in opening the forest area to cultivation and settlement, A similar process can be observed in some parts of Western India The spurious Kaira plates of Vijayarāja, forged some time after the middle of the sixth century A D , record shares granted to sixty-three brāhmanas in a village,[6] this naturally facilitated mass settlement of brāhmanas Records of this type are not many, but these two broadly indicate the colonisation of barren and jungle areas through land grants to temples and brāhmaṇas

The mode of agriculture in the settled areas, where many

[1] Ibid , 11, ll 1–14 If *sāvatā* (1 13), read as such by N K Bhattasali, is emended into *savaṭā*, it would mean that the land (*bhūmi*) was full of trees, which would suit the context better

[2] *EI*, XV, 19, ll 33–50

[3] Ibid , ll 27–33

[4] Ibid, pp 310–12

[5] Ibid, ll, 16–32

[6] *CII*, IV, 34

villages were given as *agrahāras* or benefices to brāhmanas, certainly marked an advance on what obtained in the forest region Methods of cultivation may have differed from one settled area to the other, but the basic knowledge may have been common to all While describing the Śrikanṭha *janapada* in which Thanesar was situated, Bāna refers to the ploughing of the fields, the mounds of paddy on the threshing floor looking like artificial mountains, and the irrigation of the land through *ghati*[1] the main produce being *munga* (*mudga*) and wheat[2] Obviously such methods of cultivation were known to the holders of *agrahāras*, who did not confine themselves only to religous and educational activities In the course of his march Harṣa was welcomed by them with curd, molasses, and sugar in closed cases,[3] which could not be produced in a forest village in the Vindhya area where people practised a primitive form of agriculture According to the *Harsacarita* the area which possessed black soil did not know the use of plough and oxen[4]

Anxious to eke out a living for their families the weak farmers worked hard with their spade and formed tiny plots of land,[5] arable fields were small in size and few in number[6] They did not use any manure Probably they practised the modern *jhum* type of cultivation in which the aborigines burn the forests and sow the reclaimed area when rain sets in, the burnt plants and trees acting as a kind of manure Having harvested the crop they move on to another area and adopt the same method of agriculture there Reference to the cutting of forests of the Vindhya region in the *Harsacarita* might refer to this practice Perhaps the same mode of cultivation may also have obtained in the forest region of Tippera, a part of which was settled with more than one hundred brāhmanas The settlers must have introduced there the new mode of cultivation superseding the one followed by the primitive peoples Whether land grants helped to introduce better cultivation in the Vindhya region in the time of Harsa is not known, but if some *agrahāras* were donated for the support of religious

[1] p 94 Is it the same as *arahaṭṭa* mentioned in the Cahamana Inscriptions?
[2] Ibid
[3] p 212
[4] Ibid, p 227
[5] Ibid
[6] Ibid

establishments in forest areas they may have been instrumental in diffusing there improved methods of cultivation

Although epigraphic land grants give us a fair idea of the fiscal and administrative concessions made to the grantees, they cannot be taken as a safe guide to the area donated to the temples and brāhmanas Such statistics for the period with which we are dealing are wanting even in Europe, in India the position is all the more unsatisfactory The extant epigraphic records would appear to be only a fragment of the original archives, if we bear in mind the natural and artificial ravages to which these records were subjected in Northern India However, we can form some sort of vague, very general impression of the area held by the religious beneficiaries during the first half of the seventh century We know that the monastery of Nālandā enjoyed the revenue of two hundred villages, probably an equal number may have been attached to the centre of education at Valabhī The extant copper-plates of Harṣa attest the grant of only two villages, but those of Valabhī in the corresponding period refer to the grant of at least 10 villages, and the Tippera Inscription of Lokanātha speaks of the grant of a forest region capable of supporting more than 100 brāhmanas Bāna also throws some light on the extent of the religious grants The *Harsacarita* informs us that one hundred villages with 1000 *halas* (as much land as can be ploughed by a thousand ploughs)—roughly equal to 10,000 acres—in Madhyadesa were granted to the brāhmanas by Harsa on the eve of setting out on a military expedition [1] The *Kādambarī* refers to the scribes who were engaged in drafting thousands of *śāsanas* in the palace of Tārāpiḍā [2] If *śāsana* is taken here as a charter it would appear that numerous land grants were made to the brāhmanas Besides, the *Harsacarita* refers to the *āgrahārikas*, both fake[3] and genuine, although the number of villages held by them is not mentioned Even allowing for an element of exaggeration in Bāna's account of his patron and the description of the palace of Tārāpīda in the *Kādambarī*, his writings broadly reflect the state of affairs in the first half of the seventh century All told it would

[1]*Harsacarita*, p 203

[2]*adhikarana-lekhakaih ālikhyamāna-sāsana-sahasram*, quoted in Agrawala, *Kādambari*, p 99, fn I

[3]*mārga-grāma-nirgatair-āgrahārika-jālmaih*, p 212

seem that by the time of Harsa the area of land in the occupation of the brāhmanas was considerable

The terms of transfer show that generally plots of land were cultivated not by the brāhmanas but by temporary peasants It seems that the number of independent and permanent peasant proprietors paying land tax directly to the king was falling off Fa-hsien states that 'only those who till the king's land pay a land tax', and that 'they are free to go or stay as they please' [1] This probably excludes a large number of other people who did not pay land taxes to the state but to priests, temples, monasteries or other intermediaries For in the succeeding paragraph Fa-hsien clarifies the position by stating that the monasteries are given fields and gardens with husbandmen and cattle to cultivate them [2]

The period between the fifth and seventh centuries A D also witnessed the rise of landowning temples, the prototypes of later *mathas* Although most grants were executed in favour of the brāhmanas, some were also made to the temples We learn of two such endowments of land to a temple of the goddess Pistapurī in Central India, during the first half of the sixth century A D [3] In the second half of the same century a settled village in the Gayā District, 'possessed of great wealth and enjoyment', was granted to the goddess Bhavānī by the Maukhari chieftain Anantavarman [4] In Bengal during the fifth and sixth centuries A D plots of land were granted respectively to the temples of Govindasvāmin,[5] Śvetavarāhasvāmin[6] and Kokāmukhasvāmin [7] An analysis of the grants dated in the Kalacuri-Cedi era, from the middle of the third century A D to about A D 750, shows that of thirty-one grants two were made to Buddhist monasteries, three to Hindu temples, and the remainder twenty-six to brāhmaṇas [8] Fa-hsien informs us that after the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha the kings, elders and lay Buddhists built monasteries for the monks and provided them with houses, gardens and fields, with husbandmen and cattle to

[1]Legge, *A Record of Bhddhistic Kingdoms*, pp 42–3
[2]Ibid, p 43
[3]*CII*, III, 25, ll 14–15, 31, ll 7–11
[4]Ibid, 50, l 10
[5]*Sel. Inscr*, p 342 ff
[6]Ibid, pp 338–9
[7]*EI*, XV, 7, ll 6–7
[8]*CII*, IV, Introd, p cxlix

cultivate them [1] The Chinese traveller records that the title-deeds inscribed on iron were handed down from king to king and were in force in his time But this is probably an error on his part due to a faulty memory, for no iron-plates have been recovered as yet, obviously Fa-hsien meant copper

An important factor that contributed to the rise and growth of landowning monastic institutions was the grant of *agrahāras* by the king for religious and educational purposes The later Gupta king Dāmodara Gupta, who flourished in the sixth century A D, is credited with the establishment of one hundred *agrahāras*,[2] which would mean hundred villages granted to the brāhmanas for maintaining centres of religion and education out of the income derived from them Such grants may also have been made by the Imperial Guptas, for the broken, illegible Bihar Stone Inscription of Skanda Gupta and the Bhitari Pillar Inscription supply a few instances [3] As late as the seventh-eighth centuries the memory of the grants of *agrahāras* was fresh in the minds of the brāhmanas, who forged at least two grants of *agrahāras* attributed to Samudra Gupta [4] Fraudulent *āgrahārikas*, who had no legal title to the grants, are also mentioned in the *Harsacarita* of Bāṇabhaṭṭa in the first half of the seventh century [5] Hsuan Tsang informs us that the Nālandā *vihāra* was maintained out of the revenues of about a hundred villages granted to this institution,[6] in the time of I-tsing this number seems to have risen to two hundred [7] As a result of the process of granting land these temples and monasteries developed as semi-independent areas enjoying immunities on religious grounds, and were gradually converted into mediaeval *mathas* rich enough to tempt the Turkish invaders

The accounts of Fa-hsien and I-tsing leave no doubt that the monasteries got their lands cultivated by temporary tenants I-tsing gives some idea about the nature of the tenure on which the cultivators were assigned land He states that the *Sangha* provided the bulls and fields, and generally received one-sixth of

[1] *Chinese Literature*, 1956, 3, 153
[2] *CII* III, 42, l 10
[3] Ibid, 12, ll 24–30, 13, l 18
[4] Ibid III 60 *EI*, XXV, 9
[5] p 212
[6] S Beal, *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, p 112
[7] J Takakusu (tr), *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, p 65

the produce [1] I-tsing does not indicate whether the cultivators were also provided with ploughs, seeds, manure and other equipment for agriculture It seems that the tillers of the soil were not hired labourers receiving wages, as in former times, but were semi-serfs or temporary tenants paying rental to the landowners If a temple or a monastery was the landowner, it had no payment to make to the state

The law-books of the Gupta period show that similar arrangements were made in relation to secular holdings with the difference that the owner of the land was under the obligation of making some payment to the state Kautilya provides that in new settlements land fit for cultivation should be given to the peasant by the king,[2] but Yājñavalkya lays down that land should be assigned to the cultivator by the landowner (*ksetrasvāmin*) and not by the king (*mahīpati*), who, of course, was entitled to the fruits of improvement made on the land in the case of the absence of the owner (*svāmin*) [3] From the comments of the *Mitākṣarā* and the *Vīramitrodaya* to Yājñavalkya, II 158, it appears that there were four hierarchical stages comprising *mahipati, ksetrasvāmīn, karsaka* (cultivator), and the sub-tenant or hired labourer We are not certain about the last stage during the Gupta period, but there can be no doubt about the existence of the first three The law-book of Bṛhaspati,[4] however, introduces the term *svāmin* in place of the term *ksetrasvāmin* but makes it clear that the *svāmin* formed an intermediate stage between the *rājā* and the actual tiller of the soil The *svāmin* owed this position to the practice of leasing out land by the owners to cultivators, who were liable to penalties if they neglected cultivation [5] So these cultivators were in the nature of temporary tenants and not serfs

These features of the organisation of agricultural production are corroborated by the epigraphic evidence Land grants of the fourth to sixth centuries A D in Mahārāṣtra and Gujarāt clearly establish that the recipient was given the right of enjoying the land, cultivating it or getting it cultivated on lease [6] We have no

[1] Ibid , p 61
[2] *AŚ*, II 1
[3] II 157
[4] XIX 54–5
[5] Yaj , II 157–8, *Br* , XIX 19, 53–5
[6] *bhuñjatah karṣatah pradisat karṣayatah CII*, IV, 2, l 6, 11, l 13, cf 21 l. 32, *Sel Inscr* , p 405, ll 6–7 with fn 2–3

means to determine the proportion of the brāhmanas who were actual cultivators, although their number may not have been inconsiderable, for the law-books of the period provide that brāhmaṇas might legitimately take to cultivation [1] But where whole villages were granted to a few brāhmanas, obviously they could not cultivate all the land themselves, with the result that many brāhmana villages or *agrahāras* became semi-feudal in character

We have no evidence to show that peasants in the donated villages stood exactly in the same relation to brāhmana landlords as peasants to their lords in English manorial villages, but in certain respects the peasant was completely subservient to the beneficiary In many cases because of the right of getting their land cultivated by others the donees could replace old peasants by new, thus they might oust their tenants [2]

The grants of the Gupta period from Central India show that the peasants had to render labour service (*visti*) to their king [3] The Vākātaka and some other Central Indian grants made by the feudatories of the Guptas state that villages granted to religious donees were made free from the imposition of forced labour [4] A Rāstrakūta copper-plate of the fifth century from Mahārāṣtra mentions the grant of an *agrahāra* free from all types of *ditya* and *visti* [5] Similar grants were made in Western India, one of the earliest being that of 457 This might imply that the beneficiaries were exempted from giving to the king any taxes and supplying any labour service which they could obviously collect from the village held by them Some grants from Central and Western India enjoin the inhabitants to obey the command of the donees, which has been taken to mean that the donees could commandeer impressed labour [7] But whether they could demand what was not customary is doubtful At any rate it is clear that the ruling chiefs exacted labour service in the Gupta period in Central and Western India

[1]*Manu*, X 81–2, Yāj , III, 35, *Nār* , I 56–60

[2]*CII*, IV, Introd , p clxxi

[3]These grants have been enumerated in Maity, *The Economic Life of Northern India in Gupta Period*, pp 152–3 The grants of Pravarasena II use the term *sarva-viṣṭi*.

[4]Ibid

[5]M G Dikshit (ed), *Selected Inscriptions from Maharashtra*, p 8

[6]*CII*, IV, 8, 1 6

[7]Maity, op cit , pp 152–3

What is implied in some Gupta land charters regarding the donee's right to forced labour is made explicit in the grants of the rulers of Valabhī from the last quarter of the sixth century A D A grant of Dharasena I (of about 575) confers on the religious grantee the right to impose forced labour as occasion might arise [1] Exactly the same concession is granted by Śilāditya I in his charters of 605[2] and of 610–11 [3] From the second half of the seventh century the technical term conveying the donee's right to forced labour is frequently mentioned in the Valabhī grants[4] and even in grants made by lesser chiefs such as the Sendraka chief Allaśakti (656) of Gujarāt,[5] it also occurs in the land charters of the Cālukyas of Bādāmi It is clear that backed by such a right the grantees could determine the occasion for forced labour at their discretion

Forced labour was also imposed upon the artisans The early law-books required the artisans to work for a day in a month for the king in lieu of taxes This cannot be taken as forced labour although the *karmakaras* considered identical with such labour by Kautilya may have included artisans But a charter granted to a group of merchants (*vaṇig-grāma*) in Western India in A D 592 shows that impressed labour had to be performed by the artisans not only for the king but also for such merchants as were granted the royal charter of immunity Thus the blacksmiths, carpenters, barbers, potters, etc , are to be subjected to corvée by the merchants acting as elders (*vāṙika*) [6] The workers engaged in pressing sugar and those at indigo vats are exempted from forced labour, apparently for the king,[7] because their establishments are taxed [8] Further, water-porters and milkmen, apparently working for the merchants, are not to be apprehended for free labour for the sake of the king [9] Evidently the object of these concessions

[1] *EI*, XI, 80

[2] *IA*, VI, p 12, l 6 The phrase used is *s-otapadyamāna-viṣṭi*, which is translated by Mirashi as 'with the right to forced labour arising therefrom (*CII*, IV, 89)

[3] *EI*, XI, 17, l 26

[4] Ibid , XXI, 18, l 25

[5] *CII* IV, 21 l 27, *IA*, VI, 12

[6] In translating *EI*, XXX, 30, l 28, Kosambi (*JESHO*, ii, 28) suggests that these artisans had to render forced labour in lieu of taxes, but this can be accepted only if the *vāṙikas* are taken as royal officers which is not correct

[7] *EI*, XXX, 30, l 8

[8] *JESHO*, II, 287

[9] *EI*, XXX, 30, l 8

granted to the *vanig-grāma* was to reserve the service of the artisans and unskilled workers for the merchants, a feature typical of the closed economy of mediaeval times

On the whole the nature of forced labour changed in Gupta times In the Maurya period it covered *dāsas* and *karmakaras*, who along with cleaners, measurers, guards, weighers, supervisors of grinding, etc , all engaged in working in the store-house, constituted the class that provided the labour force [1] This labour was recruited by some supervisor (*vistibandhaka*) and was paid [2] It is true that *visti* was a source of income to the state, but it is doubtful whether it was imposed on the independent peasantry living in the villages But it covered all the subjects of Rudradāman in Western India in the second century A D More radical changes appeared in the fourth-seventh centuries First, as the Vākātaka, Rāstrakūta, and Cālukya records indicate, the practice was extended to the western part of Central India, Mahārāstra and parts of Karnātaka Second, forced labour assumed a wide magnitude in Central India, where it came to be known by the term *sarva-visti*[3] Some grants from Western India of the fourth and fifth centuries, dated in the Kalacuri-Cedi era, use the term *sarva-ditya-visti*[4], which means all varieties of dues and forced labour Third, the right formerly confined to the king was now extended to religious donees and their descendants villages granted to whom had not to render any forced labour to the king Fourth, the scope of forced labour was widened The various kinds of work done by means of *visti* are enumerated by Kautilya, who mentions weighing, measuring, supervision of grinding, etc , in this connection, but he does not speak here of cultivation or purely agricultural work [5] The use of forced labour for agriculture is clearly indicated by the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana, according to whom such labour was used not for the services of the king but for those of the village headman The text suggests that in Gupta and post-Gupta times labour services were appropriated by the village headman for his comforts According to it peasant women were compelled to perform unpaid work of

[1] *AS*, II 15
[2] Ibid , V 3
[3] *EI*, XXIV, 10,1 23 The term is commonly used in the grants of Pravarasena II
[4] Ibid
[5] *AŚ*, II 15

various kinds, such as filling up the granaries of the village headman, taking things into or out of his house, clearing or decorating his residence, working in his fields, and spinning yarn of cotton, wool, flax or hemp for his clothes [1] Since the geographical knowledge of Vātsyāyana[2] and the nature of products mentioned by him apply to Central and Western India, it is fair to assume that those physical services were exacted by the village heads who were the representatives of royal power in the countryside of those areas [3] In our opinion the inclusion of working in the fields of the headman in the list of labour services catalogued here marks the beginning of an important feudal practice, which would be all the more pervasive in villages transferred to the donees with the right to labour service They would not fail to make wide and effective use of it, especially in bringing barren land under cultivation, for they enjoyed the power of cultivating the land or getting it cultivated, none the less it probably bore heavily upon the peasants

While the peasants under the donees and *ksetrasvāmins* were reduced to a servile position, the free peasants lost in status because of the imposition of several new taxes, which can be compared to feudal dues in Europe It seems that during the Gupta period the villages had to pay forced contributions of money or supplies to royal troops and officials when they halted at or passed through the village,[4] which can be likened to the tax known as *senābhakta* in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya [5] Further, they had to furnish cattle in relays for transport [6] They were also under the obligation of supplying flowers and milk to the royal officers on tour [7] These forced contributions were designed to meet the needs of the army and the state The practice of realising contributions which were not sent to the state treasury but were

[1] V, 5 5

[2] H C Chakladar thinks that he belonged to south-western India

[3] A passage from the charter of Visnusena granted to a *vanig-grāma* in A D 592 (*EI*, XXX, 30 1) declares that peasants coming to the market town from their own area at the beginning of rains for the purchase of seed are not to be seized by the lord (*svāmin*), which implies that peasants were held arbitrarily by the lord for impressed labour, probably in his fields at any time and any place

[4] *a-bhata-cchātra-prāveśya* *CII*, III, p 98, fn 2

[5] *AŚ*, II 15

a-parampara-go-balivardda *EI*, XXVII, 16, l 29

[7] Ibid

consumed locally by royal troops and officers tended to set them up as another class of intermediaries and thus to lower the position of the free peasantry

The incidence of labour services and forced contributions would not be much felt under the direct jurisdiction of the royal representatives who were mobile and not hereditary, but it could be rendered oppressive by the donees who were men on the spot with a hereditary, vested interest in the exploitation of the resources of the village This kind of labour service reminds us of the European feudal practice according to which the tenants had to carry out two obligations (i) payment of rents and (ii) furnishing labour services for cultivation of the portion of land reserved for direct farming by the master [1] In Gupta and post-Gupta times these obligations were performed towards the donees in Central and Western India, but the practice was hardly different from what we find in Europe

The judicial and administrative authority which the donees enjoyed must have added to their economic power over the inhabitants of the village Hence in some respects the beneficiaries of grants may be compared to the feudal lords of the manors But in other respects the position was different Probably those who were subjected to forced labour were not compelled to work on the fields of the grantees to the same extent as peasants in mediaeval European manors Furthermore, the area of land under the direct cultivation of the grantee was limited, for we hardly hear of the grant of more than a village at a time to the brāhmanas [2] Consequently there was little occasion for such work, and its scope was probably restricted

What mainly led to the servitude of the peasants was their transfer to the beneficiaries Fa-hsien clearly states that monasteries built for the monks were furnished with houses, gardens and fields, with husbandmen and cattle to cultivate them [3] But the earliest epigraphic reference to the transfer of peasants to a monastery is not older than the seventh century The Ashrafpur grants from East Bengal mention the persons who were in the

[1]Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, p 173

[2]In a grant of A D 533–34, however, two villages were granted by a private donor for the purposes of a temple (*CII*, III, 31, 1 7)

[3]*Chinese Literature*, 1956, 3, 153

enjoyment of a plot[1] and name the cultivators who were tilling it.[2] They indicate that while the plot was taken away from the enjoyers and given to the Buddhist monastery headed by the preceptor Samghamitra, the cultivators were left undisturbed, for the monastery would have to get its land cultivated by some peasants. They also show that another field cultivated by two persons was given to the same recipient.[3]

According to the epigraphs the practice of transferring peasants began in South India. A Pallava land grant of the third-fourth century informs us that four sharecroppers remained attached to a plot of land which was given away to the brāhmanas,[4] which implies that original cultivators were required to work on the land even when it was made over to the beneficiary. Again, a Prākrt grant of the Śālankāyana Vijayadevavarman from Ellore in the Godavari District records an endowment to a brāhmana of twenty nivartanas of land together with a house-site (*gharatthānam*) for men who receive half the crop and a house-site for the doorkeeper or the guard.[5] These two instances suggest that the sharecroppers and labourers who were attached to the fields were compelled to stick to them. Gradually the practice came to embrace peasants, who seem to have been given away to the donees in Karnātaka. A grant of the sixth century from the Bijapur District[6] issued by an early Cālukya king of Bādāmi donates twenty-five *nivartanas* of land along with all its produce, garden-cultivation, *jīraka*, water, and house (*niveśa*).[7] Apparently the term *niveśa* stands here for cottages in which the peasants lived. This is supported by a Ganga grant of about the same century from the Ganjām District.[8] It states that six *halas* of land along with four cottages (*catur-niveśana-sahitā*) were constituted into an *agrahāra* and granted free of taxes in perpetuity to god

[1] *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, I, 6, p. 90, plate A, l. 8.
[2] Ibid., ll. 8–9.
[3] Ibid., plate B, ll. 9–11.
[4] *EI*, I, l. 1–39.
[5] Ibid., IX, 7, ll. 4–13.
[6] *EI*, XXVIII, 59.
[7] Ibid., 10.
[8] Ibid., XXIII, 62–3.

Nārāyana [1] In both the grants the term *niveśa* or *niveśana* is used not merely in the sense of house or house-site but in the sense of peasants living therein, as is still done in popular parlance in the countryside From South India the practice of the transfer of individual peasants probably spread to Central India A Vākātaka grant of the fifth century speaks of the gift of four houses meant for the use of cultivators (*karsaka-niveśanāni*),[2] which implies the making over of cultivators to the beneficiary

The practice of transferring all the cultivators of the village to the beneficiary can be traced back to the sixth century A D in Orissa and the adjacent areas of Central India An inscription from the Koraput District assignable to that century[3] advises the inhabitants of a village, cultivating land therein and assured of their livelihood, to continue to live in the village, which is made over to the brāhmanas [4] This implies that the cultivators are counselled to stick to the soil transferred to the recipient, although the fact that the village is transferred along with its inhabitants is not stated in so many words in the grant Again, grants from the eastern part of Central India ask the cultivators residing in the donated villages to pay taxes to the beneficiaries, carry out their orders and to live in happiness [5] The term 'in happiness' sounds a little incongruous in the context of the fiscal and administrative privileges with which the beneficiaries were armed, but the whole instruction implies that the people were advised to stick to their village These pious sermons, however, did not always work, and hence an element of coercion had to be introduced in those areas where it was necessary to retain the services of artisans and peasants

The charters of the Maitrakas and Cālukyas of Gujarāt imply

[1] Ibid , 10, ll 10–17 The term *hala* seems to denote as much land as can be maintained under cultivation by a farmer possessing a pair of oxen, which would make it equal to 10–12 acres of land This fits in with the transfer of four houses along with six *halas* of land, for four families of ploughmen could well manage 60–70 acres of land

[2] V V Mirashi, *Vākātak Rājvams kā Itihās tathā Abhilekh*, 8, ll 14–16

[3] *EI*, XXVIII, 12

[4] *EI*, XXVIII, 2, ll 6–7, *yatah bhavadbhi (s-ca) dhruva-karmmāntārambhaeh (mbhaih) sunirvrta-visvastair-vvastavya (m)* D C Sircar (ibid , 5) interprets the passage to mean that cultivators are advised to work on lands settled with them and to live happily without molestation, but this is not a happy rendering

[5] *CII*, III, 40, ll 11–13, 41, ll 13–15

the transfer of peasants along with the soil The earliest instance can be referred to the second half of the sixth century, when the Valabhī ruler Dharasena II records the gift of plots of varying size held by five persons one of whom is called *mahattara* and another *kutumbin* [1] Probably along with the plots their holders changed hands otherwise there was no point in mentioning their names Again, a charter of the Valabhī ruler Dharasena III, dated A D 623–24, grants four plots of cultivated land of varying size held respectively by four cultivators or *kutumbins* who are named in the grant These fields were well defined and lay in the midst of plots held by other peasants,[2] among whom an element of serfdom was introduced That the peasants attached to the soil were transferred can also be inferred from the Navsari plates of an early Gurjara ruler of Gujarāt, Jayabhaṭa III (A D 706) This king bestowed a large field of sixty-four *nivartanas* on a brāhmana along with its houses, and its immovable and movable property (*gṛhasthāvara-calaka*),[3] which suggests that the householders living on this field were also made over along with the portions of land The three instances concern the gift of fields and not of villages The earliest grant which unequivocally transfers the villagers to the grantee is that of a feudatory ruler called the *mahārāja* Samudrasena, ascribable to the seventh century A D [4] According to it a village in the Kāngra area is made over to the grantee with its inhabitants (*sa-prativāsi-jana-sameta*) [5] Thus some parts of Kāngra and Gujarāt experienced serfdom during the sixth and seventh centuries

Serfdom seems to have been a feature of the transfer of those pieces of land which did not form part of organised villages but were held independently by peasant families having their habitation, not in a cluster of dwellings but in isolated houses In such a case all the land the peasant cultivated lay round his house When it was donated peasants working on it had to be retained otherwise the donee would be put to a great difficulty Some of these peasants were probably ploughmen cultivating for the sake of the donor It is therefore possible to think of two kinds of

[1] Ibid , 38, ll 21–8
[2] Ibid
[3] *CII*, IV, 21, ll 17–28
[4] Ibid , 287
[5] Ibid , 80, 1 10

serfs—those who possibly served as ploughmen and those who served as tenants living in villages The latter paid a part of their produce as rent and fulfilled the obligations laid down in the charter In the Indian context the ploughmen attached to the ground should be regarded as full-fledged serfs, while the tenants specifically transferred along with the villages may be taken as semi-serfs The latter did not have to work on the private farms of the beneficiaries, although under difficult economic situations they could not leave the village to seek means of subsistence elsewhere

Epigraphic records suggest that serfdom began in the peripheral areas and then gradually spread to the heart of the country in Northern India, it originated in mountainous or backward regions which did not have too many peasants to run the local economy, but because of the powers it gave to the grantees over the cultivators it later spread to developed areas, it began with the sharecroppers and then it covered the peasants in general, finally it began with plots of land and then it came to embrace whole villages By the middle of the eighth century serfdom became fairly common, as is attested by the following extracts from a Chinese account of A D 732 [1]

> According to the law of the Five Indies, from the king, the royal consort and the princes down to the chiefs and their wives all build monasteries separately in accordance with their respective capacities and abilities Each of them builds his own temple, but does not construct it jointly They say when each person has one's own meritorious virtues, what is the necessity of joint effort?
>
> Whenever a monastery is built, village and its folk are immediately offered to support the Three Precious Ones Merely building a monastery without making any donation of a village and its folk is not done This is followed as an example by the foreign countries The king, the queen and royal consorts have their respective village and their folk The princes and chiefs also have their respective village and their folk Donation is free and the king is not asked for that This also applied in case of building a temple When it is necessary to build a temple they build it and the king is not asked The king

Jan Yun-Hua, 'Hui Chao's Record on Kashmir', *Kashmir Research Biannual*, 2 (1962), pp 119–20

> dare not obstruct, he is afraid lest it should infect him with sins
>
> As to rich commoners, though they have no village to donate, they try their best to build temples and manage these by themselves Whenever they obtain things, they offer them to the Three Precious Ones As in the Five Indies, no human being is sold, so there are no female slaves Villages and their inhabitants could be donated if wanted and necessary

The present account shows that the practice of donating villages along with their inhabitants to the monasteries by kings, queens, princes and chiefs was as common as that of building them by these dignitaries There was no dearth of donations because not only the kings and queens but also the princes and chiefs possessed their own villages and village folk whom they could dispose of freely Princes and lesser chiefs probably received grants for their maintenance from their superior lord, but were apparently free to make a religious gift of their land with the men working on it Obviously the inhabitants were bound to serve the donors as long as they lived under them and to serve the beneficiaries when they were transferred to the latter

This Chinese account establishes a significant link between the breakdown of slavery and emergence of serfdom Speaking of donations to the Buddhist monasteries it points out that human beings are not sold in the Five Indies, and adds that there are no female slaves Although the statement reminds us of the one made by Megasthenes that there were no slaves in India, it implies that there were some male slaves in the seventh century But the absence of slavery in general did not raise any difficulty, because, 'villages and their inhabitants could be donated if wanted and necessary' Since inhabitants were transferred to the monasteries for cultivating the villages granted to them, the beneficiaries did not experience any lack of labour power

There are some indications that from the Gupta period the number of slaves engaged in production declined, and the śūdras became increasingly free from the obligation to serve as slaves Kautilya's provisions for manumission of slaves generally apply to those who are born of Āryan parents or are Āryans themselves [1] But Yājñavalkya introduces a revolutionary principle when he asserts that nobody can be reduced to slavery without his

[1] *AS*, III 13

consent [1] According to a later commentary this means that a śūdra, a ksatriya or vaiśya employed in servile work against his will shall be released by the king [2] Thus Yājñavalkya completely reverses Manu's precept, which provides for the forcible enslavement of a śūdra [3] Further, Nārada and Bṛhaspati strongly deprecate the attitude of the wretch who, being independent, sells himself [4] Besides this, for the first time Nārada lays down detailed ceremonies for the emancipation of slaves [5] A passage of Kātyāyana implies that the slaves had some sort of organization, for their leaders were known as *vargins* [6] All these causes may have undermined the institution of slavery

A significant factor which contributed to this development was the fragmentation of land through the process of partition and gift The earlier laws of inheritance, including those in the law-book of Manu and even in that of Yājñavalkya, never refer to the partition of landed property, which is mentioned for the first time in the codes of Nārada[7] and Bṛhaspati [8] This may suggest that in the middle or towards the end of the Gupta period large joint families, owning large stretches of land, began to break into smaller units Once the principle of the partition of land was recognised, the increasing density of population in the fertile river valleys of Northern India, after the earlier phases of settlement, was bound to accelerate the pace of the fragmentation of arable plots of land The pressure of population on land is indicated by an epigraphic record of the fifth century A D which shows that in Northern Bengal even 1½ *kulyavāpa* of land had to be purchased in smaller plots at four different places [9] This purchase was made for the purpose of making gifts, which further helped the process of fragmentation

There was some restriction on making gifts by private indi-

[1] II 182

[2] Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, ii, 23

[3] But *Kātyā*, v 722, repeats the dictum of Manu

[4] *Nār*, V 37, Br, XV 23 Cf Kane, *HDS*, ii, 182

[5] V 42–43 Cf, rules of manumission in *Katyā*, V 75 *Nār*, however, adds that certain classes of slaves cannot be emancipated (V 29) except by the favour of the owner

[6] *Kātyā*, V 350

[7] XIII 38

[8] XXVI 10 28, 43, 53 and 64

[9] *EI*, XX, 5, ll 5–11

viduals The Bengal inscriptions show that no sale transactions made for the purposes of gifts could be effected without the consent of the local representatives of the king and the district council The Mahārāstra inscriptions also show that gifts of land could not be made by individuals without the consent of the state But ordinarily in both cases such consent was not withheld, with the result that villages and plots of land were granted not only by the king and his feudatories but also by private individuals

We no longer hear of large plots of 500 *karīsas*, or of the state farms of the Maurya period Epigraphic references to fields of one *kulyavāpa* or of 4, 2½ and 1½ *dronavāpas*[1] do not suggest big plots According to Pargiter a *kulyavāpa* was a little larger than an acre [2] But if the *kulyavāpa* measure of land prevalent in the Cachār District of Assam be considered identical with the *kulyavāpa*,[3] the area of the latter would be thirteen acres Since one *kulya* is equal to eight *dronas*, on this basis a *dronavāpa* will be even less than two acres During the same period a survey of the land grants made by the Maitraka rulers of Valabhī in Gujarāt shows that the average plot of land did not exceed two or three acres in size [4] Naturally smaller holdings made it uneconomical to employ a large number of slaves and labourers While some may have been engaged in twos or threes, others may have been dispensed with

The traditional view that the vaiśyas were peasants recurs in the literature of post-Maurya and Gupta times [5] In the *Amarakośa* words for cultivators are listed in the *vaiśya-varga* (section) [6] But there is some reason to believe that śūdras were also becoming peasants in good numbers Several law-books show that land was rented out to the śūdra for half the crop [7] This would suggest that the practice of granting land to śūdra sharecroppers was growing more common A Pallava land grant of about A D 250–350 informs us that four sharecroppers (*ārdhikah*) remained attached

[1] Ibid

[2] *IA*, XXXIX, 215–16

[3] *Hist of Bengal*, I, 652 S K Maity holds that the *kulyavāpa* was between 14 4 and 17 6 acres *JESHO*, I, 98–107

[4] K J Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, pp 246–7, 267ff

[5] *Śānti Parva*, 60, 24–6, 92 2

[6] II 9 6

[7] *Manu*, IV 253, *Visnu*, LVII 16, *Yāj* , I 166

to the land even when it was given away to the brāhmanas,[1] it is likely that these were śūdras

Nārada includes the *kīnāśa* (peasant) among those who are not fit to be examined as witnesses [2] A commentator of the seventh century A D [3] explains this term as a śūdra,[4] which shows that peasants were thought of as sūdras Bṛhaspati provides very severe corporal punishment for the sūdra who acts as a leader in boundary disputes relating to fields,[5] which again suggests that such śūdras were owners of fields Finally, Hsuan Tsang describes the śūdras as a class of agriculturists,[6] a description which is confirmed by the *Narasimha Purāna*[7] compiled before the tenth century A D Thus this significant development, which began from Gupta times, covered all the sūdras by the first half of the seventh century A D The view that the farmer population was largely composed of śūdras[8] seems to be more true of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods than of earlier times Thus from the point of view of the rise of feudalism the transformation of śūdras from the position of slaves and hired labourers into that of agriculturists should be regarded as a factor of great significance

It seems that śūdra peasants did not take kindly to the grants made to the brāhmanas A grant of the middle of the sixth century A D from the District of Gaya lays down that it should be protected from the hands of the śūdras, as can be inferred from the phrase *śūdrakare[a]d-raksu[a]nah* used there [9] As usual the donor instructs his descendants as well as others not to interfere with or disturb the grantee, but what is unique he also points out the necessity of protecting the grant from the śūdras Thus in this case danger to the grant was apprehended from both above and below Since the crucial expression is not found in any later grant, it seems that gradually the idea of spiritual merit accruing from

[1] *EI*, I, I, 1 39

[2] I 181

[3] *HCIP*, III, 299

[4] Asahaya's comm to *Nār*, I 181

[5] XIX 6

[6] Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, i, 168

[7] 58 10–15

[8] *CHI*, I, 268

[9] *JASB*, NS V (1909), 164 In editing the Amauna Plate of the *mahārāja* Nandana (*EI*, X, 10) T Bloch construes the phrase as *sūdrakenotkīrnam* (1 8), but this is not warranted by the impression produced there, the reading is clearly *sūdrakared-raksunah*, which of course is incorrect Sanskrit

religious grants was propagated among the peasants who thus became reconciled to them

Feudal developments in mediaeval Europe were characterised by the rise of independent, self-sufficient economic units, which also arose in India as the result of land grants and certain other factors The beneficiaries enjoyed several economic rights which cut the economic ties between the central authority and the donated areas For the continuity and development of their economy they were more dependent on the local artisans and cultivators than on the officials of the central government The beneficiaries were entitled to all kinds of local dues, a part of which they must have invested in local undertakings The main idea behind tying down the peasants to the fields they cultivated was to preserve the self-sufficient village economy, which was maintained in South Bihar through other ways The two spurious copper-plates of Samudra Gupta, assignable to the seventh/eighth century, required the donee (*āgrahārika*) not to introduce any tax-paying peasants and artisans from another village into the gift villages [1] Exempt from various royal taxes and impositions, these villages were a standing temptation to the neighbouring villagers, who naturally wanted to migrate to the *agrahāras* But if such an exodus was tolerated, it would not only deprive the state of revenues but also disturb the existing economy of the village from which they migrated Hence such a restriction served to maintain the self-sufficient economy of the villages

The conditions obtaining in the villages which were independent of the beneficiaries of land grants and were placed under the charge of the village headman were not very dissimilar We have already seen that the headman, according to the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana, might compel peasant women not only to work in his fields but also to spin yarn, so that his clothes might be supplied to him locally [2] Some of the commodities thus produced were also put on sale, apparently to cater for the simple needs of the villagers [3] So the Maurya state regulation of trade and industries was giving way to the management of these affairs by the chiefs of local production units, independent of the central control

That such local units were coming into existence is also evident

[1] *CII*, III, 60, ll 12-13
[2] V 5 5
[3] Ibid

from the paucity of coins of common use from the Gupta period onwards This factor can be linked up, on the one hand, with the decline of internal trade and the consequent necessity of producing local commodities to meet local needs[1] and, on the other, with the weakening of the power of the centre, which gradually adopted the method of paying officials by grants of revenues or in kind While the Indo-Bactrians, and especially the Kuṣāṇas, issued a considerable number of copper coins, which were evidently in common use in the Punjab, and occasionally are found even as far east as Buxar in Bihar, the Gupta emperors, other than Kumāra Gupta, issued only a few copper coins Thus Fa-hsien seems to have been correct when he stated that cowries formed the common medium of exchange Even allowing for the fact that copper is more susceptible to corrosion than more precious metals, the comparative rarity of Gupta copper coins suggests that money economy was becoming weaker at this time

It is indicative of the growing disuse of coins in post-Gupta times that the religious endowments which were made in cash by the princes and individuals in the first two centuries of the Christian era were now partly replaced by grants of land In the earlier period the Sātavāhana rulers made a few land grants, but no such grants can be attributed to the Kusānas in whose dominions as well as in those of the Sātavāhanas cash grants were made to the guilds of artisans and merchants for using them for religious purposes Further, in the post-Harsa period hardly any coin can be ascribed with certainty to any ruling house The only dynasty of the period to which some coins have been attributed is that of the Maitrakas of Valabhī But according to a careful study they can be regarded only as 'so-called' Valabhī coins, for they really belong to Gupta times and are clearly comparable to Gupta coins [2] Of course, legal texts refer to the use of coins, land charters mention taxes levied in *hiranya*, and some inscriptions speak of the cost of construction and purchase in terms of money, but very few actual finds can be ascribed to this period In fact, the absence of coins during the period 600–900 has been noted by several

[1]The colonising and large-scale commercial activities during the early mediaeval period were confined to the enterprising people of the coastal area, and do not seem to have brought any substantial change in the economy of the interior

[2]This view has been communicated to me by Dr P L Gupta

scholars [1] It is not possible to make much of references to coins in literary sources, for a recent study shows that most of these sources belong to the period following the tenth century [2] It is therefore evident that coins in general became rarer from the time of Harsavardhana onwards, which leads us to the conclusion that trade suffered a decline and urban life began to disappear, a feature which can be compared with a similar development in Iran

A recent study of trade and commerce in Gupta times shows that the decline of the Roman empire and the Persian rivalry with the Byzantine empire rendered the volume of Indian trade apparently less than in the first century A D , when Pliny complains of the heavy drainage of Roman money for Indian merchandise [3] One of the two most important articles of this trade was silk exported by India through Persian merchants, the other being the spices [4] Trade in silk was so important in the Byzantine empire that in order to regulate silk prices all over the country Justinian (527–65) enacted that one pound of silk should not cost more than eight pieces of gold, and that all the wealth of one who violated this law should be confiscated [5] To further check the drainage of his country's wealth on account of the exorbitant prices paid for silk to the Persian merchants, he proposed to the Ethiopians that they should buy silk from India and sell it to the Romans, for they would thereby gain much profit for themselves and assist the Romans by saving them from having to pay their money to the Persians,[6] who were the rivals of the Byzantine empire But the Ethiopians found it impossible to buy the required silk from the Indians, as the Persian merchants in the harbours farther to the east, where the Indian ships first put in, bought up whole cargoes thereby monopolising the entire supply [7] It is evident from this that in the first half of the sixth century silk was as good an earner of bullion for India as spices in the first century The drainage of gold from the Roman empire in

[1]C J Brown *The Coins of India*, p 50, cf , p 55

[2]Important literary sources have been mentioned by L Gopal in his article in *JNSI*, XXV, pt I

[3]S K Maity, *The Economic Life of Northern India in Gupta Period*, p 139

[4]Ibid , pp 136–8

[5]Ibid p 137

[6]Richard Pankhurst, *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia*, p 46

[7]Ibid , pp 46–7

the first century A D was stopped by means of legislation, which, though supplemented by diplomacy, failed to check it in the Byzantine empire The solution was found in 551 by the introduction of silk-worms brought into the Byzantine empire secretly overland from China [1] It may have taken another fifty years to get the art of rearing silkworms spread in Byzantium, and by the end of the sixth century A D the problem of obtaining silk from the East may have been finally solved for the Byzantine empire This adversely affected Indian foreign trade, which so far as north India is concerned was confined to silk Evidently the stoppage of its export to the Byzantine empire drastically reduced whatever remained of the shrunken foreign commerce of North-Western India in Gupta times Hence so long as some new articles did not take the place of silk there was no means to restore the balance, and retrogression in foreign trade was inevitable

The decline of foreign trade may also have been caused by the expansion of the Arabs under the banner of Islam The agitated state of Western Asia, Egypt and Eastern Europe, at least in the initial stage of the Arab conquests, was bound to tell upon India's foreign trade with the countries lying to the west As we shall see later, only when the Arabs had settled down as rulers in these countries and Sind, did trade revive from the third century of the Hijri era But meanwhile there was nothing to arrest its decline Thus we have clear indications of the decline of the foreign commerce of North-Western India from the end of the Gupta period, and especially from the first half of the seventh century A D

To what extent the loss on account of trade with the Byzantine empire was made up by the diversion of Indian trade with China in the century following the fall of the Gupta empire is difficult to determine A Chinese account of the ninth-tenth centuries refers to the presence of Indian merchants in China and Chinese merchants in India in the seventh century A D ,[2] but commerce seems to have been confined to luxury articles and the use of cowries in internal transactions referred to by this Chinese account could not have helped foreign trade

[1] Ibid , p 47

[2] N C Sen, *Accounts of India and Kashmir in the Dynastic Histories of the T'ang Period* to be published by Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan

Whatever internal trade and commerce existed had to be fitted into the emerging feudal structure This is evident from the detailed rules laid down in the law-books regarding the functioning of the corporate bodies of artisans and traders It is symptomatic of the declining central authority that the king is required not only to observe the laws of the guilds but also to enforce them Brhaspati enjoins the king to approve of whatever is done by the heads of the guilds whether harsh or kind towards other people [1]

What actually prevailed can be inferred from three charters, ranging from the end of the sixth century A D to the beginning of the eighth century A D, granted to the guilds of merchants by the rulers of the coastal areas of Western India The earliest charter, first translated by D C Sircar,[2] and later translated and commented upon by D D Kosambi,[3] throws considerable light on the nature of commodities handled by the merchants It speaks of the trade in wine, sugar, indigo, ginger, oil, textiles, articles in wood, iron and leather, etc [4] Here the state regulates prices and checks weights and measures,[5] but its control of trade and commerce is not as rigid as prescribed by Kautilya On the whole the corporation of merchants is allowed a large measure of autonomy Exempted from various kinds of dues the traders are left free to deal with their labourers, herdsmen, etc [6] They are also empowered to exact forced labour from the blacksmiths, weavers, barbers, potters and other artisans [7] But the guilds of traders are not permitted to compete with one another, for they cannot congregate in the same market [8] Of course some artisans-cum-merchants are required to supply commodities to the state at half the usual rate at which they are sold to ordinary customers,[9] and others are asked to render corvée in lieu of taxes Besides, the

[1] *Br*, XVII 18

[2] *EI*, XXX, 163–81

[3] *JESHO*, II, 281–93

[4] Ibid, 285

[5] *EI*, XXX, 30, l 10

[6] Ibid, l 8

[7] Ibid, l 28

[8] By *sarvva-srenınām-ek-apanako na deyah* (*EI*, XXX, 30, l 6) Kosambi (*JESHO*, II, 286) means that all guilds are not to pay the single-market-tax, but the construction of the following passage *sarvva-srenibhih khovā (?)-dānam na datavyam* does not warrant this interpretation

[9] *EI*, XXX, 30, l, 28

traders are required to pay to the state a number of frontier taxes, customs and sales tax, but in return they are allowed immunity from the entry of royal officials in their area and the payment of dues and rations for supporting royal officials [1] The state also abandons the power of escheating the property of a sonless merchant, a right given to it by the law-book of Bṛahaspati and excercised by it as known from the *Śākuntalam* The privileges conceded to the *vanig-grāma* remind us of their counterparts granted to temples and brāhmanas from the early centuries of the Christian era and clearly show the rise of autonomous economic units in the coastal areas

We do not have any charter of this kind in the seventh century A D , but the two charters issued by Bhogaśakti, the Cālukya king of the Konkan area, in the beginning of the eighth century A D make it clear that the guilds of the merchants had gained in importance They were free to manage their affairs In one case eight villages and money granted to the temple were to be managed by the local merchants in groups of five or ten who were instructed to supervise annual religious processions and were exempted from payment of tolls and rations for royal officers,[2] in another case a deserted town was re-settled and granted along with three neighbouring villages to two merchants who were assigned a kind of municipal charter These merchants were exempted from tolls throughout the kingdom of Bhogaśakti in perpetuity, and the crown had neither the right to confiscate their property if they died sonless nor could royal officials enter their house and demand allowances and provisions [3] Of course, fines were to be imposed on the merchants guilty of sexual and physical offences, but the decision rested with eight or sixteen senior men of the town [4]

Three important points may be noted about these charters First, the grants were made not to the artisans but to the merchants among whom a few were elevated to the position of managers of the endowment or the town as the case might be The number of such managers coincides with what is recommended by the law-book of Brhaspati, according to whom two, three or

[1] Ibid , 1 6
[2] *CII*, IV, 31 ll 25–49, 56–62
[3] Ibid , 32, ll 27–38
[4] Ibid

five persons shall be appointed as advisers of the guild [1] Second, the charters tied down the merchants to the management of villages, which in one case were attached to a temple and in another to the rehabilitated town The merchants enjoyed practically the same immunities and privileges as were enjoyed by priests and perhaps by some feudal barons in the villages granted to them But since they were encumbered with the management of villages they could not give sole attention to their trade and commerce These charters therefore show the feudalisation of merchants by turning them into some kind of landed intermediaries Third, the activities of every guild were restricted to its locality so that it had no freedom of competition, a feature characteristic of the closed economy in the Middle Ages

A fourth charter of a somewhat similar nature comes from the Dhārwār District in Mysore Issued in about A D 725 by the *yuvarāja* Vikramāditya of the Cālukyas of Bādāmi to the *mahājanas* (brāhmana burgesses?) of a town called Porigere, now Lakshmeshwar, it lays down the mutual obligations of the royal officers and the inhabitants of the town [2] Royal officers are asked to protect royal gifts and proclamations, untenated houses, continued enjoyment of (estate), etc [3] On the other hand every household of the town is required to pay a tax to the district governors [4] Subject to this the guild (of *mahājanas*) seems to have been authorised to levy taxes varying according to the status of the householder, to realise fines for theft and minor delinquencies and for the ten officers, and to escheat the property of childless persons [5] The town has several other guilds, for every occupied house is required to pay according to its status to the guild of braziers The charter is a clear indication of the growing powers and self-sufficiency of the guilds, which are entitled not only to religious taxes but also secular taxes from the urban population

The Gupta period does not know of conversion of royal income from tolls and customs into benefices granted to the temples The kings and chiefs were content with depositing certain amounts in

[1] XVII 10
[2] *EI*, XIV, 14
[3] Ibid , 189
[4] Ibid , 190
[5] Ibid

cash for religious purposes [1] In one case it seems to have been deposited with a committee of five,[2] which shows the continuation of the practice of Kuṣāna times when many guilds in Central India and Western Deccan acted as depositories of money on which they paid interest for religious purposes

The guilds of artisans, more numerous in pre-Gupta times in Western India but by no means extinct in Gupta and post-Gupta times, were never granted any charters, which were granted in that region only to the merchants The first, issued towards the close of the Gupta period, shows that just as priests and temples were given authority over peasants, so also merchants were given authority over their artisans In the first case it meant the abnegation of royal power in the rural area, in the second its abnegation in towns In the first case the needs of the landed grantees were met by attaching peasants to them, in the second the needs of the mercantile grantees by attaching labourers and artisans to them In the first case the priests enjoyed the power of taxing the rural population, in the second, as time passed, the *mahājanas* came to wield that power over the town people At any rate the charters issued by the princes of Western India and Karnātaka can be compared to feudal charters granted to similar guilds in the Europe of the Middle Ages, and together with the Dharmaśāstra rules they indicate the growing independence of the traders' guilds of royal control and their increasing self-sufficiency

The practice of issuing coins by the *nigamas* during the post-Maurya and Gupta periods seems to provide further evidence of the rise of self-sufficient economic units This accelerated the process of political disintegration, for issuing coins was an important function of the sovereign power Besides, the issue of seals by Nālandā villages, which glorify themselves as *janapadas* even in Gupta times,[3] indicates that they were emerging not only as politically independent but economically self-sufficient units At least four such seals were issued from villages, some of which can be identified During the earlier period coins and seals were issued by the *nigamas*, but not by rural units as we find in the post-Gupta period

[1] *CII* III, 5, 7, 8, 9
[2] Ibid , 5, cf , *JESHO*, II, 283
[3] Majumdar & Altekar, *The Vākaataka-Gupta Age*, p 267

In the Gupta period irrigation also tended to become a local responsibility The *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya lays down detailed rates to be paid by the peasants to the state for different kinds of irrigation, which makes it clear that irrigation facilities were chiefly provided by the state Megasthenes also informs us that the state maintained irrigation inspectors The Śaka ruler Rudradāman (*c* A D 150) claims that he reconstructed the famous Sudarśana lake in Saurāstra without levying imposts and forced labour from his subjects During the Gupta period this responsibility was carried out by the provincial governor of this region But already from the beginning of the Christian era the local population had begun to take the initiative in matters of irrigation Dion Chrysostom (*c* A D 50–117) informs us that in India, in order to convey water from large and small rivers, the local inhabitants made many channels [1] Later, the law-book of Brhaspati lays down that the guilds should look after irrigation dams [2] For want of data we cannot trace the history of this process, but once the tendency began it was bound to undermine the influence of the central power in the countryside and help the rise of independent economic units

We can draw certain tentative inferences from the analysis made above Unlike Europe, in India the decentralisation of political power was not the result of fiefs granted to comrades-in-arms, the most important factor which contributed to this development was the practice of land grants made to priests and temples It is clear that foreign invasions did not play any appreciable part in the process of feudalisation, as was the case in Europe

The *agrahāras* or villages granted to brāhmaṇas bear some resemblance to manors, for in some cases the beneficiaries enjoyed the right of levying forced labour of all varieties on their tenants The scope of forced labour seems to have been very wide, and it appears that the village headman, who compelled peasant women to work in his fields and residence, was developing as a manorial lord But, on the whole, while a great part of the time and energy of European peasants was consumed by their work on

[1] Oratio, XXXV, 434, McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, p 175

[2] *kulyāyana-nirodhaḥ* according to the reading of Mitra Misra in the *Vīramitrodaya*, 426, but *kulyānām nirodhah* in *Br* , XVII, 11–12

their master's fields, the peasantry in India gave most of their time to their own fields, of the produce of which a considerable share went to the holders of grants and other intermediaries There is nothing to show, however, that most peasants were subject to such intermediaries, on the contrary the number of free peasantry seems to have been far greater Further, the process of subinfeudation was not so extensive in India as in Europe, so that the actual tillers of the soil maintained some kind of indirect connection with the central government

Because of the difficulty in interpreting obscure epigraphic terms used for hereditary administrators, and because of immense variations in the use of these terms in a vast country such as India, it is not possible to indicate with precision the hierarchical stages in the feudal organization, or the exact relation between *sāmanta, uparika, bhogika, pratīhāra, dandanāyaka*, etc But it is beyond doubt that by the end of the Gupta period, say, *c* A D 500, the appearance of a large number of hereditary intermediaries tended to reduce many of the free peasantry to a semi-servile status Nevertheless, the stages in the feudal organization were not so many and so complex as we find them in England Although the *sāmantas* appear as feudal vassals from the sixth century A D onwards, we have no exact idea of their rights and obligations except that they had to furnish soldiers to their lords

In mediaeval Europe land was granted to the feudal barons for services rendered to the state, but in India this practice seems to have been of a very limited character According to Manu an official placed in charge of ten villages was assigned as much land as could be tilled by twelve oxen, or about a hundred acres Probably from Gupta times the idea was gaining ground that territorial units were meant for the enjoyment of local governors and officers, but in the early stage central control was effective enough to check this Although I am not in a position to check the disputed passage in Fa-hsien's account which is taken as referring to the grant of revenues to the attendants and bodyguards of the king, there can be no doubt about a similar statement of Hsuan Tsang According to this Chinese traveller, one-fourth of the total revenues went directly to the state, but the remaining threefourths were reserved respectively for the endowment of priests, scholars and government officials From this it can be inferred that the officials who supervised the work of administra-

tion in the whole kingdom were assigned only one fourth of its total revenues This position was quite different from that which we find in mediaeval Europe, where the feudal baron was granted the revenues of the whole area placed under his administrative charge on condition that he sent regular tributes to the overlord out of the revenues collected from the people under him

Summing up we can state that certain broad features of feudalism are noticeable from the Gupta, and especially from the post-Gupta, period onwards These may be enumerated as the granting of both virgin and cultivated land, the transfer of peasants, the extension of forced labour, the restriction on the movements of the peasants, artisans and merchants, the paucity of coins, the retrogression of trade, the abandonment of fiscal and criminal administration to the religious beneficiaries, the beginnings of remuneration in revenues to officials, and the growth of the obligations of the *sāmantas* The new society was marked by the appearance of a substantial class of landlords and a numerous class of servile peasantry How far these traits continued or were modified in subsequent times will form the subject of the following chapters

CHAPTER II

FEUDAL POLITY IN THREE KINGDOMS (c AD 750–1000)

The process of the transfer of fiscal and administrative rights to the recipients of land grants which began on a large scale under the Guptas and Harsa was continued by their successors The Gupta kings directly made very few grants, most grants being endowments made by their feudatories or subordinate chiefs in Central India But under the Pālas grants were generally made by the kings themselves The earliest example is that of Dharmapāla, who granted four villages in North Bengal to the temple of Nunna Nārāyana, founded by his vassal Nārāyanavarman at Śubhasthalī [1] The real beneficiaries of the grant were the Lāṭa brāhmanas, priests and other attendants who waited upon the deity, and are also mentioned as grantees [2] The villages were made over as a perpetual grant, together with low land (*talapātaka*) and occasional markets (*hattikā*) with all their localities, with the fines for the ten offences, and with exemption from royal molestation [3] Dharmapāla again made over a village, presumably in the Nālandā area, to some local Buddhist religious leader, free from taxes and the entry of royal agents, together with the right to punish thieves [4] The last twelve lines of the grant are not legible, but it is a reasonable guess that the inhabitants were instructed to carry out the orders of the grantee and pay him all proper dues [5] A village named Mesika[6] in the district of Monghyr[7] was granted on similar terms by Devapāla to a brāhmana Here the cultivators (*ksetrakaras*) and not the inhabitants (*prativāsins*), as in the earlier grant, were expressly ordered to

[1]*EI*, IV, 34, ll 30–52
[2]Ibid , ll 50–1
[3]Ibid , ll 52–53
[4]Ibid , XXIII, 47, ll 17–24
[5]Ibid , Second side ll 1–2
[6]This may possibly refer to Mehus in the Lakhisarai area in south Monghyr
[7]*EI*, XVIII, pp 304ff , ll 38–44

obey the grantee [1] The same king granted five villages on similar terms to the Nālandā monastery at the instance of Bālaputradeva of Sumātrā [2] Again, in about 993, three villages in North Bengal (*Pundrabhukti*) together with a certain measure of land formerly enjoyed by the Kaivarttas were given by Mahipāla for Bhuddhist worship on similar terms [3] Four years later the same king granted a village in the same division to a brāhmana for the same purpose, with the usual fiscal and administrative rights [4] There may have been more religious grants under the Pālas, but the available ones show that in Bengal and Bihar brāhmanas, Buddhist monasteries, and Śaiva temples emerged as landed intermediaries, enjoying not only economic privileges at the cost of the king and cultivators but also administrative at the expense of the king

It is remarkable that the Pāla writs granted the religious beneficiaries the right to punish thieves, a right which was usually retained in the land charters of Central India in Gupta times Further, they were also authorised to punish ten offences (covered by the term *daśāparādhadanda* or *daśāpacāra*) These ten offences are enumerated as the appropriation of things that are not given, killing in a manner that is not in accordance with precept, the pursuit of wives of other men, harshness of language, untruthfulness, slandering in all directions, incoherent conversation, coveting the property of others, thinking of things that are wrong, and tenacity of that which is not true [5] This list practically covers all offences against family, property and person No cognisance may have been taken of the last four offences, but certainly other offences when committed within the village under the nose of the grantee would not go unpunished It is held that *daśāparādhadanda* implied the right to the proceeds from ten offences,[6] but the term *danda* should be taken in the sense of punishment and not in the sense of fine The beneficiaries therefore were given the right to punish the people guilty of these offences, which may have taken the form of fine or physical punishment Thus the practice of granting the right of

[1] Ibid , l 45
[2] *EI*, XVII, 17, ll 33–40
[3] *EI*, XXIX, I, B ll 26–44
[4] Ibid , XIV, 23, ll 30–49
[5] *CII*, III, 189, fn 4
[6] Ibid , 189

the administration of criminal law and justice began from the middle of the eighth century and became a common feature in the Pāla kingdom Without doubt religious elements came to be vested with such fiscal and administrative powers as they never enjoyed before in Bengal and Bihar

During the same period the Pratīhāra rulers made several land grants to brāhmanas in Northern India In 836 an old *agrahāra* grant in the Kālañjara *mandala* of the Kānyakubjabhukti was renewed by Bhojadeva I The grant had been made by a feudatory with the approval of Nāgabhata II, but had fallen into desuetude on account of the incapacity of the local legal officer in the reign of Rāmabhadra So the village in question was regranted by Bhoja to the old brāhmana family, who were to enjoy it with all the income excepting the gifts already made to gods and brāhmanas [1] A second grant of village as *agrahāra* was renewed by the same king in Gurjjarattarābhūmi The grant had become ineffective under his great grandfather, but was issued by Bhoja to the grandson of the donee [2] The two cases show that once made the grants became hereditary in theory and practice, and the successors of the original benefactor king were obliged to observe the grant, even when they were made by feudatories Mahendrapāla, the son and successor of Bhoja, granted a village with all its income to a brāhmana in the District of Chapra, which at that time was included in the Division (*bhukti*) of Śrāvastī [3] A village in the Banaras area was made over to a brāhmana on similar conditions by Mahīpāla in 931 [4] Mahendrapāla II granted a village to a temple in Gwalior on practically the same terms, with the difference that it was bestowed along with its pasture grounds [5]

Strikingly enough the grants of villages made directly by the Pratīhāra kings do not specify the various agrarian and administrative rights which are made over in the Pāla charters to the donees They merely transfer all the income of the village, and, like their Pāla counterparts, enjoin the villagers to obey the grantees and pay them all dues The Pratīhāra kings made the

[1] Ibid, XIX, 2, ll 1–16
[2] Ibid, V, 24, ll 6–9
[3] *IA*, XV, pp 112–3, ll 1–12
[4] Ibid, pp 138ff, ll 9–17
[5] *EI*, XIV, 13, ll 9–13

above-mentioned grants on religious grounds, but whatever their intentions there is no doubt that they gave rise to landed aristocracy between the king and the cultivators

The process seems to have been still stronger in the kingdoms of the feudatories of the Pratīhāras In 893 Balavarman, son of Avanivarman I, the Cālukya vassal in Kāthiāwād, granted a village to the temple of Tarunādityadeva along with the fines to be realised from persons convicted of ten faults, not to be entered by royal agents, along with taxes and trees, and some other privileges which are not clear [1] Another Cālukya feudatory of the same line Avanivarman II, with the approval of the royal official Dhiika, bestowed another village on the same god on the same terms [2] In 914 Dharanivarāha, a Cāpa vassal in eastern Kāthiāwād, granted a village to a teacher as reward for learning on the same conditions as the Cālukya vassal had done [3] In 946 at the request of a Cāhamāna vassal a village was granted to a sun-temple by Mādhava, the governor of Ujjain [4] The conditions of grant were somewhat different, for it carried with it the additional right to the enjoyment of timber, reservoirs of water, and certain new taxes *skandhaka, mārgganaka*, etc ,[5] the significance of which is not clear Finally, we may take note of the grant of a village in 959 made by a Gurjara vassal of the Pratīhāras in the Alwar area to the guru of a *matha* and his successive disciples [6] The above instances show that the practice of religious grants was more widespread in the kingdom of the feudatories of the Pratīhāras than in the regions which they governed directly The grantees were charged with the duty not only of maintaining law and order in the villages but also of realising various revenues, which could not have been possible without engaging subordinate staff for the purpose Thus in parts of Gujarāt and Rājasthān religious grantees emerged as landed intermediaries in charge of police and fiscal administration

The Rāṣtrakūtas, who ruled over the whole of Mahārāstra, southern Gujarāt, and parts of Karnātak, seem to have made more grants of villages to temples and brāhmanas than the Pālas

[1]Ibid , IX, 1, A, ll 1–20
[2]Ibid , B, ll 32–58
[3]*IA*, XII, 195 plate II, ll 1–24
[4]*EI*, XIV, 13, ll 19–25
[5]Ibid , ll 24–25
[6]Ibid , III, 36, ll 3–15

or the Pratīhāras Instances of these grants are available from the beginning of their rule In 753–54 Dantidurga granted a settled village in the Kolhapur region to a brāhmana with the right to collect all the customary taxes, such as land-tax, occasional payments to officials, etc , and with the right to punish persons guilty of ten offences [1] Similarly, in 806–7 Govinda III allotted to a brāhmana in the Nāsik area a village with the above-mentioned rights, to which he added the right to forced labour, and exemption from molestation by regular and irregular soldiers and from the entry of all royal officials [2] All these concessions occur in his Paithan plates of 794,[3] and are repeated in a copper-plate grant of his in the Nāsik District [4] In 871 a village was granted on similar terms to some brāhmanas by Amoghavarṣa [5] Thus once increased under Govinda III, the fiscal and administrative concessions granted to religious donees were maintained on the same scale for about a century A grant of a village made in 933–34 by Govinda V, however, omits the right to forced labour and exemption from the entry of royal officials [6] In 972–73 a village was given in gift on these terms by Amoghavarsa III in the Khandesh area,[7] but not rendered free from the entry of regular and irregular soldiers This shows that in spite of variations in terms the process of the grant of villages to priests continued for more than two hundred years under the Rāṣṭrakūtas All their copper-plates have not been discovered, yet those found so far are not few We learn that on his coronation in 915 Indra III granted afresh 400 villages resumed by previous rulers [8] The Cambay plates of Govinda IV state that on a similar occasion he gave 600 villages for religious and educational purposes (*agrahāras*) to brāhmanas and 800 villages to temples (*devakulas*) [9] These two alone could give a total of 1400 villages allotted to religious donees We have no reasons to doubt the authenticity of these figures, for land grants were so frequent and

[1] *IA*, XI, 112–3, ll 29–44
[2] Ibid , 156–9, ll 34–50
[3] *EI*, III, 17, ll 57–58
[4] *IA*, VI, 67–8, plate IIb, ll 12–13
[5] *EI*, XVIII, 26, ll 66–67
[6] *IA*, XII, 251ff , ll 50–3
[7] Ibid , 266, ll 43–57
[8] A S Altekar, *The Rāstrakūtas and their times*, p 100
[9] *EI*, VII, 6, ll 46–9

common, in fact the total number of all such villages may have been far greater

Religious grants were also made by the governors and feudatories of the Rāṣṭrakūtas In 821 Karkkarāja Suvarnavarṣa of the Gujarāt Rāstrakūta branch made a perpetual grant of a field to a religious teacher free from taxes, not to be entered by regular and irregular soldiers and royal officers [1] In 863 Dhruva III of the same branch granted to a brāhmana a village on similar terms, the beneficiary was also authorised to punish the persons guilty of ten offences and to requisition forced labour from villagers [2] These chiefs made grants independently of their overlord, but Bankeya, the governor of Banavāsī, under Amoghavarṣa, prevailed upon the latter to alienate a village and plots of land in several villages in favour of a Jain temple [3] All told, the number of villages alienated by the Rāstrakūṭas and their vassals in favour of learned brāhmanas was considerable [4]

The villages were granted in perpetuity, and the successors of the grantors were placed under the obligation of respecting these grants Some grants survived even the overthrow of the family of the donor Thus Indra II re-granted a village named Trenā, formerly bestowed upon the donee's ancestors by Dhruva I and II of the Gujarāt branch The descendants were anxious to secure a re-grant of village, because the grantor's family no longer held power in southern Gujarāt [5] Again, as shown earlier, Indra III renewed the grant of as many as 400 villages resumed by previous kings

Administrative rights were explicitly made over to the beneficiaries both by the Pālas and the Rāṣṭrakūtas, although not by the Pratihāras The Rāstrakūṭas, however, gave the religious donees more coercive and administrative powers than even the Pālas did Some Pāla grants make gift-villages free from the entry of royal officials, others from that of regular and irregular soldiers, and still others from both, they also empower the donees to punish persons guilty of ten offences But many Rāstrakūta grants allow all these concessions together to the grantees They

[1] Ibid, XXI, 22, ll 48–51
[2] *IA*, XII, 184–5, plate IIb, ll 1–19
[3] *EI*, VI, 4, ll 35–49
[4] Altekar, op cit, p 189
[5] Ibid, p 98

do not, however, specifically mention the right to punish thieves, which is obviously covered by the right to punish ten offences On the whole, we get the impression that the religious donees were not only larger in number under the Rāṣtrakūtas than under the Pālas or the Pratīhāras but also stronger in administrative powers

The grant of villages to priests may be compared to the practice of benefices given to the Church in mediaeval Europe, with the difference that brāhmanas and temples were not an organised group in India The secular counterpart of benefices was, however, weak in early mediaeval India Examples of officials and vassals paid by land grants are very few The first Pāla grant (802) refers to an official in North Bengal called *daśagrāmika*,[1] who, according to Manu, was paid one *kula* of land [2] But the later Pāla records do not mention this official, probably his post was a survival of the past which was fast disappearing In 993 Mahīpāla resumed the grant of 200 standard measure of land once allotted to the Kaivarttas for maintenance in return for certain services which are not specified [3] This seems to have been a secular grant Very probably *rājas, rājaputras, rānakas, rājarājanakas, mahāsāmantas, mahāsāmantādhipatis,* etc , mentioned in the Pāla land charters were mostly vassals connected with land Some were vanquished and reinstated in their territories, others were probably granted land for their military service, which both classes had to furnish to their overlord

The Pratihāra records also do not know of many secular grants In 890 Bhoja I granted land in Gorakhpur to a Kalacuri chief called Gunāmbhodhi or Gunasāgara I, who had rendered valuable military service to his lord by snatching away the fortune of Gauda [4] Under Mahendrapāla II Vidagdha, a high official who signed two land grants,[5] seems to have been in the enjoyment of a village,[6] possibly assigned to him by the Pratīhāra king A case of secular fief can be inferred from the grant made by a Gurjara feudatory of the Pratīhāras, who describes the area in his

[1] *EI*, IV, 34, l 47
[2] VII 118–19
[3] *EI*, XXIX, 1B, ll 28–29
[4] *bhojadev-āpta-bhūmih sri-gunāmbhodhidevah yena āhṛtā gauḍā-lakṣmī*, *CII*, IV, 74, verse 9
[5] *EI*, XIV, 13, ll 14, 27
[6] *sri-vidagdha-bhog-āvāpatye dhārāpadrakagrāme* Ibid , l 21

possession as *svābhog-āvapta vamśapotakabhoga* [1] This suggests that as a scion of the ruling clan[2] he was assigned by the Pratīhāra overlord the district of Vamśapotaka for his personal benefit His grants makes it clear that the assignee was responsible for the administration of that area, which lay in the Gurjaratrābhūmī [3]

The Rāstrakūta grants nowhere directly alienate villages in favour of officials and vassals, but Altekar, who made a detailed study of their political system, holds that many state officers were paid by 'rent-free' land [4] We may better use the term revenue-free, for rent is something paid by the tenants to their landlords Altekar adds that sometimes officers were remunerated by salaries, paid partly in cash and partly in kind [5] In any case so far as revenue organisation is concerned, villages in the Rāṣtrakūta empire were grouped mainly in units of ten and its multiples[6] on the Dharmaśāstra pattern, according to which officers in charge of such units should be paid grants of land [7] The arrangements seem to have been followed by the Rāstrakūta kings, especially in payment to the district and village headmen Thus a *deśa-grāmakūta-ksetra* or a revenue-free field of the district headman is twice mentioned in a spurious Ganga record [8] Apparently the village headman, who was known as the *grāmakūta* in the Rāstrakūta dominions, was remunerated similarly It is definite that in the southern Maratha country the village headman enjoyed revenue-free land A record of the Rattas of Saundatti informs us that the *gavunda* (village headman) of Kadole gave 200 *mattaras* of cultivable land, which was his revenue-free service land, situated in the circle of revenue-free service plots of the headmen of the locality [9] In such a case the fiscal officer would have to render account to his master for the area under his

[1] *EI*, III, 36, l 4

[2] Ibid

[3] Ibid , pp 266–7

[4] Ibid , p 245

[5] Ibid , p 189

[6] A *bhukti* comprising five hundred villages under the Rāṣtrakūtas is mentioned in *IA*, XI, 112–3, l 32 Units of 12000, 500, 300 and 70 are also mentioned (Altekar, op cit , p 77)

[7] *Manu*, VII 19

[8] Altekar, op cit , p 179

[9] Ibid , p 193

jurisdiction, except the portion of land or revenues set aside for his payment

The dominions of the Gujarāt branch of the Rāstrakūtas presented a curious mixture of the decimal pattern and the Rajput system consisting of units of twelve and eighty-four villages We know of a unit of twelve villages given as a grant,[1] and a unit of eighty-four villages forming a part of a group of seven hundred and fifty villages which in its turn was strangely enough divided into units of ten villages [2] A unit of eighty-four villages is also mentioned in another grant of the Gujarāt branch [3] Units of twelve villages or their multiples also prevalled in other parts of the Rāṣṭrakūta empire outside Gujarāt The Sanjān plates of Amoghavarsa I mention a group of twenty-four villages,[4] and under Govinda III the Pratisthānabhukti contained several groups of twelve villages [5] A unit of twelve villages is also known under Amoghavarsa III [6] All these were obviously fiscal units, and, on the basis of the analogy found under the Cāhamānas, they were given as fiefs to vassals or officials who were responsible for their administration

We have some evidence to show that under the Rāṣṭrakūtas military service was paid by land grants Sometimes the Pallava kings commemorated the victories of a general by renaming villages after him and granting them to brāhmanas [7] But Rāṣṭrakūṭa military officers were probably rewarded with villages for their bravery *Grāmabhoktṛs* serving the Śilāhāras[8] appear to have been military captains enjoying villages According to Altekar *grāmapatis* mentioned in the Rāstrakūta records were holders of *inām* (reward for service) villages [9] Since the village headman was known as *grāmakūta* in Mahārāṣtra and was different from the *grāmapati*,[10] the latter may have been a military captain If we rely on the account of the merchant Sulaiman it would appear that the

[1]*EI*, iii, no 9, ll 15–16
[2]Ibid , I, 8, ll 35–6
[3]*IA*, XII, 160, ll 45–6
[4]*EI*, XVIII, 256–7
[5]Altekar op cit , p 137
[6]*IA*, XII, 266
[7]Ibid , VIII, 279–80
[8]*EI*, III, 37, l 47
[9]Altekar, op cit , p 189
[10]Ibid

contemporary kings did not pay their soldiers He informs us that the troops of the kings of India are numerous, but they do not receive any pay The king assembles them only in the case of a religious war They then come out and maintain themselves without receiving anything from the king [1] This applies to the troops supplied by the vassals The merchant also remarks that, like the Arabs (but unlike most other Indian kings), the Rāstrakūta king gave regular pay to his soldiers,[2] but it is not clear whether they were paid in cash or by grants of land Altekar suggests that the families of the soldiers were supported by villages tenanted to them [3] At any rate Sulaiman's statement probably refers to the standing army maintained by the Rastrakūtas But perhaps the troops supplied by the vassls outnumbered those maintained by the king

Certain officials were paid by specified taxes Taxes in kind imposed on foodstuff, vegetables, etc , formed part of the pay of local officers in the time of Rāstrakūtas [4] Altekar holds that *bhogakara*, a substitute for *uparikara*, implied taxes, normal or additional, in kind or cash, for the part payment of the salaries of the mofussil state officers [5] This reminds us of a later, similar practice under the Candellas and the Gāhaḍavālas, and indicates partial feudalisation, for under the feudal system the barons who carried on administration were not paid in cash or kind directly by the state but were assigned certain revenues for their remuneration

Vassals were assigned wide territories by their Rāstrakūṭa overlord New fiefs were created as a reward for military service Most probably Amoghavarsa I granted the territory between the Narmadā and the Tapi as a compensation for the loyal services of Karkka,[6] and the extensive dominion, which served as a bulwark against the Gurjara-Pratihāras,[7] continued to be held by the Gujarāt Rāstrakūṭas till *c* A D 862 [8] In their turn these chiefs allotted territories to their vassals We learn from the inscription

[1] H M Eliot and J Dowson (ed), *History of India as Told by Its Historians*, I, 7
[2] Ibid , 3
[3] Altekar, op cit , p 251
[4] Ibid , p 181
[5] Ibid , p 216, cf , pp 194–5
[6] Ibid , p 86–7
[7] *IA*, XII, 158, the term *svāmi* is used for the overlord of Karkka
[8] Altekar, op cit , pp 86–7

that a unit of 750 villages belonged to Karkka II[1] Later the same source states that in this unit Candragupta served as the general (*dandanāyaka*) of the *mahāsāmanta* Pracanda[2] It is natural to infer that this group of villages was held by Pracanda as a fief from Karkka II, and perhaps the former's father Dhavalappa had received it as a reward for his bravery and loyalty[3] Incidentally it also shows that after having received fiefs the vassals made their own administrative arrangements A further instance of a grant made by the Gujarāt line is found in the reign of Govinda III (813) when the *mahāsāmanta* Budhavarsa, possibly of Cālukya extraction, was given feudal sway over a group of twelve villages[4] Similarly, the Rattas of Saundatti in the southern Maratha region, feudatories first of the Rastrakūtas and then of the later Cālukyas, had possibly created their own sub-feudatories, for they are described as the lord of the *deśakāras*[5] These powerful vassals practised subinfeudation without any reference to their overlord But governors or lesser vassals either prevailed upon the sovereign to grant villages or did it with his permission On the application of Bankeya, the governor of Banavāsi, Amoghavarsa I alienated a village in favour of a Jain temple[6] Similarly, a Cālukya vassal of Govinda III had to obtain his sanction for giving a village to a Jain sage[7] Again, Śankaragana, feudatory of Dhruva, took the latter's order for granting a village[8] But whatever might be the difference between the bigger and smaller vassals, subinfeudation was practised widely under the Rāstrakūtas

The Pratihāra system differed from the Pāla in that it provided for subinfeudation The period under review provides no clear case of subinfeudation under the Pālas Nārāyanavarman, the *mahāsāmantādhipati* of Dharmapāla, was instrumental in securing a grant of four villages from his overlord to a temple he had built,[9] but he himself was not in a position to make such an

[1] *EI*, I 8, verse 20
[2] Ibid, ll 34–5
[3] Hultzsch, ibid, p 53
[4] *tad-datta-siharakkhī-dvadasake prabhujyamāne* *EI*, III, 9, ll 15–19
[5] *IA* XIV, 24, cf, Altekar, op cit, p 263
[6] *EI*, VI, 4, l 34
[7] *IA*, XII, 18
[8] *EI*, IX, 26, ll 27–8
[9] *EI* IV, 34, ll 30–52

endowment The brāhmanas, Buddhist monasteries and temples, which received villages from the Pāla kings, may have assigned a part of their revenues or land to subvassals for management, but we have no means to prove this On the other hand we have several instances of subinfeudation under the Pratīhāras Under Vatsarāja a donee transferred a sixth part of the donated village by a deed of endowment to Bhatta Visnu in Gurjjarattrābhūmi,[1] somewhere in the Jodhpur area where the inscription has been discovered This would imply that for religious purposes religious beneficiaries could freely dispose of the villages under their possession As regards feudatories, some made grants with the sanction of the king, while others did so on their own initiative The Cālukya feudatory Balavarmā granted a village to the temple of Tarunāditya in Kāthiāwād in his own right, but another feudatory of the same line, Avanivarmā II (898), had to secure the approval of an official of the Pratīhāra king, in order to grant a village to the same temple [2] In both cases the grantee was given the right of enjoying the benefice or getting it enjoyed, cultivating it or getting it cultivated [3] This left scope for further subinfeudation, leading to four stages of tenancies in the feudatory dominions Another case of similar subinfeudation took place in 959 under a Gurjara feudatory in the Alwar area The vassal Mathanadeva, a kinsman of the ruling clan, disposed of part of his benefice freely, by granting a village to the guru of the *matha* and his successive disciples [4] The important clause with regard to the management of property was *kurvatah kārayato vā*,[5] which implied absolute rights and left clear room for subinfeudation Under this category also comes the grant of a village in eastern Kāthiāwāḍ by a Cāpa vassal in 914 to a teacher, without the permission of the overlord, but with the right of subgranting given to the donee [6] The feudatory had secured his territory through the favour of the feet of his Pratīhāra suzerain [7] Of a different nature was the grant made by a high official Mādhava, the governor of Ujjain, at

[1]Ibid , V, 24, ll 6–9
[2]Ibid , IX, I, plates a and b
[3]Ibid , plate A, l 19
[4]Ibid , 36, ll 3–6, ll 10–15, ll 21–3
[5]*EI*, III, l 16, l 17, cf p 264, fn 6
[6]*IA*, XII, p 195, plate II, ll 1–24
[7]Ibid

the instance of a Cāhamāna vassal Indrarāja, to a temple built by the latter [1] The land charter was jointly signed by Mādhava and another royal official Vidagdha,[2] which shows that even high Pratihāra officers were not free to make grant without royal approval This reminds us of the grant made by Dharmapāla at the request of his great vassal Nārāyanavarmā in North Bengal The above examples would show that subinfeudation was practised not only in the dominions of their feudatories but also in the area directly governed by the Pratihāras, but it was more frequent in the territory held by vassals

The right of subinfeudation and ejection conferred on religious donees was a more prominent feature of the Rāstrakūta polity The beneficiaries were authorised to enjoy the village or to get it enjoyed, to cultivate the land or to get it cultivated [3] This important concession is specified only in a few Pratihāra charters in Gujarāt and Rājasthān, and not found in the Pāla charters Under the Rāsṭrakūtas the practice seems to have been universal in Mahārāstra, southern Gujarāt and Karnātak The privilege was fortified by the provision that royal officials were ordered not to cause any disturbance in the enjoyment of the village or getting it enjoyed by others, in its cultivation or getting it cultivated by others [4] This left clear and ample scope for subinfeudation by the donees In such cases tenants would be mostly secular and would be requisitioned by those temples and brāhmaṇas who were given more villages than they could manage by themselves Records of subinfeudation by religious donees are wanting because they could not be recorded on copper-plates But there is little doubt that the donees exercised this important privilege bestowed on them

The Pāla land charters mention more than two dozen grades of officials who had to be notified of the land grant [5] Perhaps they were connected with the fiscal system in some way or the other The toal number of the various categories of officials in the Pāla

[1] *EI*, XIV, 13, ll 20–9
[2] Ibid, l 27
[3] *IA*, XI, 159, ll 49–50, XII 184–5, plate II, l 19, plate III, l 1 *EI*, XXII, 12, ll 54–5, etc
[4] Ibid
[5] 'The Bhagalpur Plate of Nārāyanapāla', *IA*, XLVII, p 304ff, ll, 30–6

kingdom cannot be calculated, but the term *aśesa-rājapurusān*[1] used for them indicates a fairly large number It seems that the greater part of the Pāla kingdom in Bengal and Bihar was administered by regular officers, who made central authority felt in the different parts of the kingdom The position was radically different in the Pratihāra kingdom, the only officials mentioned in the grants made by the Pratīhāra kings are *niyuktas*[2] Since they had few officials, probably their government rested in the hands of vassals who were kept under effective control On several occasions their high feudatories and *mahāsāmantas* had to obtain royal permission to make land grants Curiously enough we notice more officials in the dominions of their feudatories than in the area directly administered by the Pratīhāra kings But even here they numbered about half a dozen in contrast to more than two dozen kinds of officials mentioned in the Pāla land grants This might suggest that the Pratihāra feudatories relied for administration on their sub-feudatories So neither the Pratihāra kings nor their feudatories could develop any elaborate administrative machinery, and the greater part of the Pratīhāra empire was probably governed by vassals

The administrative machinery of the Rāstrakūtas was a little more elaborate than that of the Pratihāras A charter of 753–54 informs only three officers, *visayapati*, *rāstrapati* and *grāmakūta*, of the land grant[3] A land grant of Krsna I (772) found in the Chanda District of Madhya Pradesh mentions only the first two officers and the *bhogapati*[4] But a grant of 794 speaks of two new officials, *āyuktaka* and *niyuktaka*,[5] who usually appear in all later grants[6] Thus we do not come across more than five regular officers It may be argued that the other officers are not mentioned because they were not concerned with the grants[7] But if this analogy is extended to the Pāla grants it would imply that two dozen Pāla officials were connected with land grants, which does not seem to be reasonable Really the Rāstrakūta system did

[1]Ibid, l 30
[2]*IA*, XV, 138ff, l II J 36
[3]*IA*, XI, 112–13, ll 28–9
[4]*EI*, XIV, 6 l 42
[5]Ibid, III, 17
[6]*IA*, XI, 159, ll 35–6, VI, 67–8, plate IIb of Govinda III, ll 4–5
[7]Altekar, op cit, p 261

not provide for too many officers, for like the Pratihāras they mainly depended for their administration on their feudatories and vassals This can be also inferred from the absence of the names of the police officials in the Rāstrakūta records, only the Antroli-Chharoli copper-plate of Karkkarāja of Gujarāt mentions officials concerned with thieves (*corodharanikas*)[1] Again the argument that they need no mention in land grants[2] does not seem to be tenable, probably in Mahārāstra and Gujarāt police functions were entrusted to local vassals, which dispensed with the necessity of employing regular officials for the purpose

The titles and designations of Pāla and Pratihāra kings and officials betray feudal relationships The epithets *paramabhattāraka, parameśvara*, and *mahārājādhirāja* adopted by later Gupta rulers and then by Pāla and Pratīhāra kings do not indicate any real increase in royal power but merely suggest that the king was supreme over lords, chiefs and princes owing allegiance to him The term *mahā* (great or chief) found in the designations of Pāla officials *mahā-daussādhasādhanika*, *mahā-kārtākrtika*, *mahā-sāndhivigrahika*,[3] etc , shows that they were being brought in line with feudal vassals such as *mahā-sāmanta* and *mahā-rāja*

The tendency to feudalise officers was stronger under the Pratihāras We learn that in one case Kokatta, the commander-in-chief (*balādhikrta*) of Mahendrapāla II, was known as *paramesvara-pād-opajīvīn*[4] His contemporary, Mādhava, who held the title of governor (*tantrapāla*) and chief commander (*mahādandanāyaka*), was known as *mahāsāmanta*,[5] probably a title conferred on him by his Pratīhāra overlord Furthermore, Undabhata, the governor of a town, was a *mahāpratihāra*, but he held the title of *mahāsāmantādhipati*,[6] head of the vassals Apparently these titles carried certain privileges and obligations, of which we have no clear idea Nevertheless, the *mahāsāmanta* was an important figure, and in erecting religious pillars his subjects made reference to his reign and to that of his overlord[7]

[1] Ibid
[2] Ibid
[3] *EI*, XVII, 17, ll 26–33, XXIX, Ib, ll 31–4
[4] *EI* XIV, 13, ll 19–20
[5] Ibid , l 20
[6] Ibid I p 173, l 5
[7] Ibid , IV 44, ll 1–10

Feudalisation of functionaries seems to have been a development of some importance under the Rāṣṭrakūtas, Śrī-Māndalla, the *mahāsādhivigrahika* of Dhruva, was a *sāmanta* (vassal) entitled to the use of five great musical instruments [1] Provincial governors were given the status of *mahāsāmanta* or *mahāmandaleśvara*,[2] and often bore the title of *rājā* or *rasa* (Canarese) [3] Some *visayapatis* (district officers) enjoyed feudatory status [4] *Bhogikas* or *bhogapatis*, officers in charge of *bhuktis* or *tālukās*, sometimes possessed feudatory titles,[5] as also did the governors of large towns Kuppey, the governor of Soratur in Karnātak, was a *mahāsāmanta* under Amoghavarsa I,[6] in the same manner as a governor of Siyadoni under the Pratihāras Military officers were likewise being given pompous uniforms, and they were allowed certain privileges which seem to have been confined to the feudal chiefs As we learn from the case of the brāhmana *dandanāyaka* Visottara under Govinda IV in 930, they were invested with the robes of their office, assigned distinctive parasols, and permitted to use elephants and chariots [7] The *yuvarāja* or the heir-apparent was also given feudal titles [8]

The association of feudal titles with officials may be interpreted in two ways, either the *sāmantas* or *mahāsāmantas* were appointed to different posts or else the officers were placed in the recognised feudal categories The first does not seem to be possible for several reasons The offices were older while the feudal ranks were evolved later Secondly, under the Pratīhāras we know of officers who at first did not hold feudal titles but received them only later Thirdly, if we accept the first alternative it would mean that even the *yuvarāja* was first made a *mahāsāmanta* and then raised to the status of crown-prince This lands us in an absurd position, for generally the eldest son was considered to be *yuvarāja* by his birth Hence the second alternative that officials were feudalised sounds more logical The process of feudalisation

[1] *EI*, X, 19, ll 65–6
[2] Ibid, XIX, 4a, 1 4
[3] Altekar, op cit, p 173
[4] Ibid, p 177
[5] Ibid, p 178
[6] Ibid, p 182
[7] *EI*, XIII, 334 (verse 10)
[8] Altekar, op cit, p 152

affected the whole social order, and in the Rāstrakūta kingdom, besides feudatories, regular officers, civil and military, high and low, were placed in one feudal rank or the other It seems that official posts by themselves did not carry sufficient weight unless they were given feudal recognition

An indication of the growing feudalisation of officials is found in the practice of using the same terminology to express the relationship between the vassals and the king and also that between the officials and the king Although the term *rāj-opajīvin* is used at one place in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya,[1] similar expressions came to be used frequently for both officials and vassals in the inscriptions of our period The Parivrājaka inscriptions of Gupta times use the term *pāda-pind-opajīvin*,[2] subsisting on the royal subsidy, but now in the Pāla and other inscriptions we have numerous other terms of the same type These may be enumerated as *pādapadm-opajivin*,[3] *rāja-pāda-opajivin*,[4] *pāda-prasād-opajivin*,[5] *parameśvara-pād-opjivin*,[6] etc

Sometimes the vassals are also called *bhrtya* and *sambandhin*, as can be inferred from the Prākrt text *Samaraiccakahā* by Haribhadra Sūri (*c* A D 700–770) [7] It shows that the defeated chiefs entered into the relations of 'kinsmen' with the conquering overlord and his nobles Thus two nobles, one a Śabara and the other a vaisya, attachaed to the same prince, treated each other as *sambandhin*, a term translated as kinsman by Dr Dasharatha Sharma [8] But they neither belonged to the same kin nor were related to one another by ties of marriage The term *sambandhin*, however, had to be used, because no other word could express this bond between the overlord on the one hand and his nobles on the other It also seems to imply the relationship between two vassals of the same overlord We learn from the same text that when a frontier chief rebelled against his overlord, the son of that

[1] *AŚ*, II 7

[2] *CII*, III, 23, ll 10–11

[3] *EI*, XXIII, 47, l 15

[4] 'The Bhagalpur Plate of Nārayanapāla', *IA*, XLVII, 304ff, l 37 This title is frequently used

[5] *CII*, III, 46, l 11

[6] *EI*, XIV, 13, ll 19–20

[7] *Proceedings of the 24th Session of the Indian History Congress* (Delhi, 1961), pp 80–1

[8] Ibid

lord asked his people not to take very stringent measures, saying 'This Vigraha is an insignificant chief But he had been paying tribute to our father Hence he is our kinsman and we should not take any precepitate military action against him '[1] The prince looks upon Vigraha, the *bhrtya* of his father, as his elder brother,[2] the idea being that both the prince and the vassal were the dependants of the overlord The fact that a prince (ksatriya) of the ruling dynasty considers himself as the younger brother of a defeated aboriginal Śabara chief shows that the hereditary element, so characteristic of the varna system, did not always determine the social relations, which were sometimes shaped by political and military considerations although were expressed in the prevailing tribal or family idiom Thus an aboriginal chief who paid tribute to, and depended on, the king was regarded as his son and not condemned as an *anārya*[3] according to the Dharmaśāstras However, the terms *sambandhin* and *bhrtya* are not employed by the epigraphs to indicate feudal relationships, generally the feudal lords and officials are described as subsisting on the lotus feet of the king

The chief obligation of the vassals was to pay homage and render military aid to their overlords One of the ways in which they paid homage was to mention the name of their overlords in their grants, as was done by the vassals of the Pratīhāras Similarly, on several occasions Cāhamāna,[4] Cālukya,[5] Guhilot[6] and Kalacuri vassals gave military help to their Pratīhāra overlords The grants issued by the Pāla kings, from Devapāla onwards, invariably describe their victory camps as being attended by numerous tributary princes from Northern India accompanied by their contingents [7] This may be an exaggeration, but may refer to small

[1] Ibid , p 81

[2] Ibid

[3] In the inscriptions the nearest approximation to *sambandhin* may be the phrase *yatha-sambandhya mānakān*, used in the Rāstrakuta grants to qualify the *rāstrapati, visayapati, grāmakūta, yuktaka, niyuktaka-adhīkarika, mahattaras*, etc , who were addressed and instructed about the land grant Apparently the phrase does not convey any kind of special feudal relationship, it merely speaks of those who are concerned with land grants

[4] *HCIP*, IV, pp 22–3, 27

[5] Ibid , p 25

[6] Ibid

[7] *udīcīn-āneka narapati prabhṛti paramesvara -seva-samāyāt āsesa -jambūdvīpa-bhūpāla* *EI*, XVII, 17, ll 22–3

local chiefs who assembled at the temporary capitals to wait on their Pāla overlords At any rate there is no doubt that in order to suppress the Kaivartta revolt in about 1070 the Pālas mobilised the military support of their vassals on a massive scale

The Rāstrakūta records give us some idea of the powers and privileges as well as the obligations of the vassals A measure of the high feudal rank enjoyed by some vassals was their investiture with the *pañcamahāśabda* by the Pratihāra[1] and Rāstrakūta kings [2] Without doubt this was the highest distinction that could be attained by a vassal, for even the *yuvarāja* enjoyed no higher feudal privilege than this Even when some feudatories had adopted such imperial titles as *paramabhattāraka-mahārāja-prameśvara*, they continued to bear this epithet It was, however, not known in the Pāla kingdom, although it obtained in Assam and Orissa Under the Rāstrakūtas vassals were also permitted to use a feudal throne, flywhisk, palanquins and elephants,[3] of which we have no clear indication under the Pālas and Pratīhāras As shown earlier, an important right of the vassals was to create their sub-vassals, some of whom were given the privilege of using the five great musical instruments, we may quote here the examples of the *mahāsāmanta* Nimbadevarasa, a vassal of the Konkan Śilāhāras,[4] and of the *mahāsāmanta* Buddhavarasa, a vassal of the Gujarāt Rāstrakūṭas [5] Subject to the payment of tribute the big vassals enjoyed full power over their revenues They could assign taxes[6] and grant villages, sometimes with and sometimes without the permission of the overlord Under the Western Cālukyas vassals could also sell villages without the sanction of the imperial power [7]

The vassals bore both civil and military obligations towards their overlord Their most important civil obligation was regular payment of tribute, which was sometimes personally realised by the overlord The Rāstrakūta king Govinda III went on tour in

[1] *EI*, IV, 44, ll 1–10, IX, 1, l 3

[2] Ibid, XXII, 12, l. 39, *IA*, XII, 184, plate IIb, l 1, the term used in these grants is *samadhigat-aseṣamahāsabda*, but see the Antroli-Chhaṛoli record of Karkka II quoted in Altekar, op cit, p 42

[3] Altekar, op cit, p 263

[4] *EI*, XIX, 4a, ll 4–5

[5] Ibid, III, 9, ll 12–19

[6] *IA* XIII, 160–1, ll 45–54, XII, 136

[7] *EI*, III, 307

the southern parts of his empire to levy tribute from his feudatories[1] A later text, the *Nītivākyāmṛta*, refers to special presents made by vassals in the court on such festive occasions as the birth of a son or a royal marriage[2] Other obligations of a civil nature were compliance with imperial orders, and attendance at the imperial court on ceremonial occasions and at periodical intervals[3] which took the form of rendering homage The vassals were clearly not obliged to render any advice to the overlord or render him any administrative assistance at the centre

Military obligation was more important, and consisted in rendering aid to the overlord in times of war The vassals of the Rāstrakūtas had to supply a certain number of troops to their lord and participate in his imperial campaigns The Cālukyas of Vengi had to furnish forces to the Rāstrakūtas in their wars against the Gangas[4] Narasiṃha Cālukya, a feudatory of Indra III, took a successful part in the latter's campaign against the Gurjara-Pratihāra king Mahīpāla[5] The Gujarāt Rāstrakūta viceroyalty, in practice a large fief, was created to serve as a shield against the Gurjara-Pratihāras for the protection of Mālwa,[6] which was also a bone of contention between the Marathas and the Rajputs in the eighteenth century

Just as the Rāṣtrakūta rulers claimed military service from their vassals, so also their vassals claimed it from their sub-vassals This can be inferred from the Kolhapur inscription of the Śilāhāra *mahāmandaleśvara* Gaṇḍarādityadeva Although a record of 1135, it might be taken as a survival of the state of affairs when the Śilāhāras were the vassals of the Rāstrakūtas It describes the relations of the *mahāsāmanta* Nimbadeverasa with various kinds of vassals, inimical and friendly, probably towards his overlord Gaṇḍarāditya The *mahāsāmanta* is represented as 'a breaker of the hair-parting of the dames of hostile barons, a gallant dear to the courtesans of warriors, a wind dissipating the clouds [of] opponent barons, a furious elephant to Nāgaladevi, a time of world dissolution to enemy barons, a Gopāla to the worthiest of

[1]*IA*, XI 127
[2]XXX 32 quoted in Altekar, op cit, p 265
[3]Ibid, p 264
[4]Ibid, pp 91–4
[5]Nāga Varmma's *Karnātakabhāsābhūsana*, ed, L Rice, Introd, p xiv
[6]*IA*, XII, 158

barons, a heroic Kumāra to the demon Tāra's rival barons, an awful rutting elephant to the beds of the lotuses [who are] the barons of Tondai, [a] rod for the skilful right hand of King Gaṇḍarāditya . . . crest-gem of barons . . .'[1] This glowing account of the achievements of the great vassal may not be literally true, but it clearly indicates the obligation of a *mahāsāmanta* to suppress inimical and protect friendly *sāmantas*.

The overlord exercised control over his feudatories in various ways. Under the Rāṣṭrakūtas feudatories had to entertain an ambassador from the imperial court. He exercised general supervision and control, similar to that of the Resident in British India. According to Sulaiman he was received with the profound respect due to the representative of the paramount power. He maintained numerous spies for obtaining information. Amoghavarṣa I is known to have covered the courts of hostile kings with thousands of courtesans, who probably worked under the imperial ambassador.[2] The overlord made his power felt by alienating villages in the dominions of his vassals. Kṛṣṇa II allotted a village situated within the jurisdiction of the *mahāsāmanta* Pracaṇḍa.[3] Disloyal feudatories were kept under check by the fear of humiliation and retribution that followed the failure of their rebellions. They were subjected to various indignities; the ruler of Vengi had to sweep the stables of his victor Govinda II.[4] Feudatories had to surrender their precious gems, treasures, dancing girls, horses and elephants to the imperial power as punishment for their disloyalty.[5] Even their wives were put into prison.[6] Sometimes the defeated feudatories were dispossessed of all their property and territories, out of which the king created livings for his dependants, as Krsna III did

[1] *vijaya-lakṣmi-kantam, ripu-sāmanta-simantini-simanta-bhangam, vīra-vārāngana-priya-bhujangam, vairi-samanta-megha -vighatana-samīranam, nagaladevīya gandha-vāranam, vidvista -sāmantavilaya-kalam, sāmanta-gaṇḍa-gopālam, dāyāda-samanta-tārāsura-vīra-kumāram, sāmanta-kedāram, tonda-sāmanta-pundarīka-sanda-pracanda-mada-vedandam, gaṇḍarādityadeva-daksa daksina-bhujādaṇḍam . . . sāmanta-siromani*. *EI*, XIX, 4a, ll. 5–8, tr. L. D. Barnett, ibid., p. 34.

[2] Altekar, op. cit., p. 264.

[3] *EI*, I, 8, ll. 33–5.

[4] Ibid., XVIII, 26, verses 43–6.

[5] Altekar, op. cit., p. 267.

[6] Ibid.

in South Arcot District after having conquered the Cola territories [1]

We have no clear idea of the royal machinery for dealing with the vassals Perhaps the *mahāsāndhivigrahika* was in charge of the Rāstrakūta royal policy towards the vassals both in times of war and peace Altekar holds that this official drafted all the land charters because the foreign office possessed the most reliable and up-to-date information on the exploits and genealogy of the grantor to be incorporated in the grants [2] But an equally, if not more, important portion of the charter related to the whereabouts of the grantor and grantee as well as of the village to be granted, and this could have been better recorded by the revenue office However, this had to be done by the *sāndhivigrahika*, because, in our opinion, he dealt with feudatories of all kinds The *Mānasollāsa* written in 1131 by Someśvara III of the Cālukya dynasty of Kalyāṇi, which had supplanted the Rāstrakūta power in 973, lays down that the *sāndhivigrahika* should be an expert in summoning and dismissing and in installing the *sāmantas, maṇḍaleśas*, and particularly the *mānyakas* [3] Since peacetime relations with the vassals consisted in stipulating tributes levied on grants of land or in confirming the jurisdiction of the vassal over the fiefs, he drafted all secular charters and even those relating to land grants to brāhmanas and temples [4]

In spite of imperial control sometimes the vassals made their power felt in central politics The feudatories of Govinda II rebelled against him and offered the crown to his uncle Amoghavarṣa III, who was pressed by them to accept it to preserve the glory of the Rāstrakūta kingdom Altekar thinks that the phrase *sāmantai-ratha ratta-rājya-mahim -ālamb-ārtham-abhyarthitah*,[5] which conveys this meaning, is figurative,[6] but the election of the king among the Pālas of Bengal and the Somavamśis of Orissa lends support to the selection of Amoghavarsa III This instance therefore shows that the vassals could even depose and

[1] *EI*, IV, 40, verses, 34–5
[2] Altekar, op cit, p 166
[3] II verse 128
[4] *Mitākṣara* on *Yāj*, I 319–20
[5] *EI*, IV, 40, verse 21, V, 20 verse 19
[6] Altekar, op cit, p 151

install kings, although such cases were rare and did not have the sanction of law

The vassals and aristocratic elements occupied a fairly important position in local government, which were being gradually monopolised by narrow family circles Supervisors over units of ten or twelve villages were appointed by the district officers from amongst their relatives In the Dhārwār District an officer of Amoghavarsa I ruling over a unit of three hundred villages had under him a relative in charge of twelve villages [1] Bankeya, the governor of Banavāsī, appointed his son Kundatta to administer the Niḍgugundage twelve [2] According to Altekar the terms *rathika, rāstriya, rāstrapati,* and *rāstrakūta* were used to denote local chiefs, district officers, and big landlords [3] Some records mention *visayamahattaras* and *rāstramahattaras*,[4] who seem to have been associated with the management of local affairs, but they probably represented aristocratic and hereditary rather than popular elements

The mention of only the village elders in the grants presupposes some social stratification in the rural area In the Pāla grants of Bengal and Bihar all sections of the village population right from the brāhmanas down to the caṇḍālas are informed of the land gifts But they do not figure in the Rāstrakūta grants in Mahārāstra and Gujarāt, on the other hand their place is taken by the *mahattaras* or the *mahattarādhikārins* [5] Some of these rose further in status and acquired the rank of *rānaka*, such was the *mahattaka* Gogu-Rānaka, who acted as the executor of a grant of Amoghavarsa I [6] A *mahattarasarvādhikārin*, who held a similar position under Kṛsna II,[7] is another example Apparently the *mahattaras* were elevated at the cost of the other sections of the rural population, and they provided a suitable social base for the recruitment of higher functionaries and for the growth of feudalism under the Rāstrakūtas

The development of feudal relations between the state and the

[1] *EI*, VI, 107
[2] Ibid , VII, 214
[3] Altekar, op cit , p 26
[4] Ibid , p 158
[5] *IA*, XII, l 41, 263, ll 45-6
[6] *EI*, XVIII, 257
[7] Altekar, op cit , p 160

guilds also characterised the Rāstrakūta polity A guild of the merchants of Dambal was invested with umbrellas, *chowries* (ceremonial fans), and royal charters by the Cālukya king Jagadekamalla [1] The same seems to be true of the guilds under the Rāstrakūtas, for the Kolhapur[2] and Miraj[3] inscriptions of the Śilāhāras, the feudatories of the Rāstrakūtas, refer to the banner of the guild of the Vira-Balañjas (the company of Brave Merchants) bearing the device of a hill Umbrellas, *chowries* and banners were symbols of power delegated to the guilds by the kings, and reminds us of feudal charters granted to them in mediaeval Europe Like feudal vassals, guilds were placed under the obligation of supplying soldiers to their sovereign The Kolhapur record describes the guild of merchants as 'exalted in abundant boldness, embraced by the lady Fame, having their breasts a home for the goddess of victory (won by their arms), lofty in prowess (extending) over the world' [4] Another record speaks of a similar guild under the Cālukyas as comprising persons, 'whose breasts were embraced by the goddess of perfect impetuosity and bravery' [5] All this shows that guilds maintained soldiers and probably helped their overlords [6]

The Pālas had no fixed capital Pātaliputra,[7] Mudgagiri,[8] Rāmāvatī[9] (near modern Gaura in the Malda District), Vataparvataka (modern Vateśvara-parvata near Patharghatā in the Bhagalpur District), Vilāsapura or Haradhāma,[10] Sāhasagaṇḍa,[11] Kāñcanapura,[12] and Kapilavāska[13] (the last four unidentified) are mentioned as their *jayaskandhāvāras* All these capitals were

[1] *IA*, X, 188

[2] *EI*, XIX, 4, l 12

[3] Ibid b, ll 2–3 This banner of the guild is also mentioned in a Calukya Inscr (*IA*, V, 344)

[4] *EI*, XIX, 34

[5] *IA*, X, 189

[6] *EI*, IV, 34

[7] Professor Basham informs me that according to the *Cūlavamsa* the Manigrāma supplied mercenaries to the kings of Ceylon

[8] 'The Bhagalpur Plate Nārayanpala *IA* XLVII, p 304ff , ll 27–8

[9] 'The Manhali copper-plate etc ', *JBAS*, LXIX, Pt I p 66ff , l 30

[10] *IA*, XIV, 166–8, XXI, 97–101, *EI* 23, l 28 cf , ibid , XXIX, 4, fn 3

[11] *EI*, XXIX, 1, b, l 26

[12] Ibid , 7, l 24

[13] Ibid , XXXIII, 47, l 2

situated on the Gangā, which served as a great unifying factor in the Pāla dominions But the constant shift of the seats of power was certainly a disintegrating factor in the kingdom, and indicates administrative decentralisation typical of feudal polity In this respect the Pratihāras enjoyed more stability, for only Ujjayinī and Mahodaya, identical with Kanauj, are known to have been their capitals [1] They did not feel the necessity of impressing their power on the feudal lords by moving their capital from place to place

In contrast to the Pālas the Rāstrakūtas had a definite capital situated at Mānyakheta or Malkhed We know of their several military and ordinary camps,[2] from which they issued land charters Al Masūdī informs us that the seat of the Rāstrakūta king's government was generally among mountains, which Altekar does not believe [3] But the statement may indicate shifting military camps at places with good natural defence for the suppression of refractory vassals

What distinguished the Rājput polity was the imposition of clan aristocracies on old, settled villages The Gurjaras came in the wake of the Hūṇas from Central Asia It is thought that they were the Indian equivalents of a Central Asian people Wusun, who came to be known as Gusur in the fourth century, and this gave rise to the term Gujar which was sanskritised into the term Gūrjara [4] We may add that as a foreign element the Gusurs appeared in India earlier An inscription of the third century from Abbotabad mentions 'Shaphar who is the son of Maka and a member of the Gaśūra clan or class' [5] Here both Maka and Shaphar are foreign names, and so is the term *gaśūra*, which is equated with the Krorayina *guśura* and Kuchean Sanskrit *gauśura*, interpreted as a person of good family or of the Gauśura class of nobility [6] This suggests that the Gausuras or Gujaras came to India as a conquering minority Coming from outside, they

[1] An early capital of the Pratihāras was Merta, 60 miles north-east of Maṇḍor The term *rājadhānī* in the sense of capital is used in the mediaeval Deccan (*The Early History of the Deccan*, I–VI, ed G Yazdani, p 51)

[2] Ibid , XI, 159, l 37, *EI*, VII, 13, l 32

[3] Altekar, op cit , p 248

[4] P C Bagchi, *India and Central Asia*, pp 138–9

[5] *EI*, XXX, 61

[6] Ibid

imposed themselves as dominant clans on settled villages The tribal practice that the spoils should be distributed among the members of the tribe led to the apportionment of villages among the conquering chiefs, some of whom received them in units of eighty-four Units of twelve and eighty-four villages are found in Gujarāt under the Rāstrakūtas, and may have originated because of Gurjara settlements in that area [1] So far as the kingdom of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras is concerned, this unit first occurs in a ninth century inscription of a Cālukya feudatory of the Pratīhāras,[2] but units of twelve and its multiples are found in the records of the Cāhamānas, Paramāras, and Caulukyas [3] This is understandable because perhaps all these three tribes were ethnically allied to the Gurjara-Pratīhāras, as can be inferred from the bardic traditions which trace the origin of all these peoples to a common sacrificial pit (*agnikunda*) on Mount Abu Whether earlier tribal organisation in Central Asia knew of the practice of sharing settlements in certain numerical units is a point worth investigation When the Yue-chis conquered Ta-hia (Tokharestan) in the second century B C , they distributed the whole area among five chiefs [4] But in the early Middle Ages the Central Asian tribes preferred to have units of twenty-four The earliest indication is found in Tokharestan in the middle of the seventh century A D , when the Turkish ruler of that region divided that area into twenty-four districts with the help of the Chinese [5] We have also some idea of the number of the component tribes of the Oghuz, a Turkish people of Central Asia whose history is known from the eighth century A D In the beginning the Oghuz were a group of nine tribes,[6] but as they gradually incorporated defeated peoples into their group the number rose to twenty-two in the eleventh century [7] Slowly their number went up to twenty-four, for in the Seljuk period the Qiniq are listed by a contemporary as one of the twenty-

[1]Place-names in North-Western and Central India can throw some light on the nature and extent of the Gurjara expansion, and the village units in Muslim and British times on their original character

[2]*EI*, IX, la, l 10

[3]R S Sharma, 'Land grants to Vassals and Officials in Northern India (1000–1200)', *JESHO*, IV, 88, 90–1, 94

[4]P C Bagchi, op cit , p 21

[5]Ibid , pp 22–3

[6]C E Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p 210

[7]Ibid , p 210–11

four clans of the Oghuz [1] Probably the Central Asian custom of increasing the number of clans in a national unit was imported into mediaeval India According to the later bardic tradition the Rajputs consisted of thirty-six clans, which in the beginning may have numbered twelve or twenty-four It seems that whenever new territories were conquered an attempt was made to provide at least one village for every clan of the conquering horde, giving rise to units of twelve or twenty-four villages But later these units became conventional, and the head of a clan or the scion of the ruling chief was given groups of twelve villages or their multiples

What is the significance of the introduction of the duo-decimal system? The Pāla fiscal units of one and ten villages placed under the *grāmapati* and the *daśagrāmika*[2] were as old as Manu It seems that under the decimal system officials appointed by the king administered the areas placed under their charge under direct royal control Perhaps this accounts for so many officials under the Pālas, although under the Rāṣṭrakūtas some decimal units were held by feudatories and their relatives Again, under the decimal system officials were paid by grant of some land, which formed a very small part of the total area under their jurisdiction On the other hand under the duo-decimal system, if we go by the Cāhamāna inscriptions of later times, territorial units were held mainly not by regular officials but by vassals who generally happened to be the members of the ruling class Further, the decimal system seems to have prevailed in Eastern India, and from the eighth century it also obtainted in the Deccan, where the new peoples could not penetrate in any considerable numbers On the other hand the duo-decimal system prevailed in parts of Rājasthān and Gujarāt, and at a later stage in Uttar Pradesh also [3] In course of time the assignees of these Rājput village units came to look upon themselves as their enjoyers and called them their personal estates (*svabhoga*)

The increase of religious intermediaries in land, the payment of vassals and officials by land grants, the feudalisation of the titles of kings and officials, the shifting of capitals, the imposition of clan chiefs on old villages, all these factors may be taken as

[1] Ibid , p 298, fn 44

[2] *EI*, IV, 34, 1, 47 The *dasagrāmi* first appears in Kautilya's *AS*

[3] Cf , H C Raychaudhuri, *The Early History of the Deccan*, Pts I–VI, ed G Yazdani, p 51

feudal elements in the early mediaeval polity of Northern India But on the whole most of them are more typical of the Prātīhāra polity than of the Pāla In the Rāstrakūta polity, however, the number of religious beneficiaries enjoying fiscal and administrative rights was greater, the right of subinfeudation was widely recognised, the obligations and privileges of the vassals, who sometimes deposed their overlord and installed another, were fairly defined, and even guilds were treated as vassals Officials were few, and were becoming feudalised Local administration was mainly manned by the feudalised officials, vassals and their families, who probably maintained some link with the village elders The Rāstrakūta capital was, however, fixed Although bonds of kinship were used in some cases to organise administration, the early mediaeval polity can neither be regarded kin-based nor segmentary

CHAPTER III

FEUDAL ECONOMY IN THREE KINGDOMS (*c* A D 750–1000)

The existence of landed intermediaries, restrictions on the movement of artisans and peasants, and the decline of trade which appeared in the economy of Gupta and post-Gupta times were strengthened under the rule of the Pālas, Pratīhāras and Rāstrakūtas The Pālas created many religious intermediaries in land The endowments were enjoyed by Vaisnavite[1] and Śaivite[2] temples Far more important were the Buddhist monasteries,[3] one of these, Nālandā, owned 200 villages in the second half of the seventh century [4] Their number was increased by five under Devapāla in the ninth century [5] Uddantapurī, Vikramasilā and Jagaddala may similarly have possessed hundreds of villages Further, we have records of several brāhmanas who were endowed with villages [6] It is suggested that such grants accounted only for a fraction of agricultural land in Bengal and that they did not touch the mass of cultivators [7] But if the pattern of expenditure under Harsa served as a model to his successors, it could appear that about ¼ of land revenue may have been conferred on beneficiaries for educational and religious purposes In any case even the Pāla grants that survive suggest that a sizable number of villages was held by priests, temples and monasteries

We have no indication of bigger religious and educational institutions holding numerous villages in the Pratīhāra dominions But several villages were granted as *agrahāras*[8] by the

[1] *EI*, IV 34, ll 30–52
[2] *IA* XLVII, pp 304 ff, ll 39–46
[3] *EI*, XXIII, 47, ll 17–24
[4] J Takakusu (tr), *A Record of the Buddhist Religion* (I-Tsing's account), p 65
[5] *EI*, XVII, 17, ll 33–40
[6] Ibid
[7] P C Chakravarti, *History of Bengal* (ed R C Majumdar), I, p 647
[8] *EI*, XIX, 2, ll 1–16, V, 24, ll 6–9

Pratīhāra kings Besides these, villages were granted to individual priests and temples by both Pratīhāra rulers and their feudatories

In the Rāstrakūta kingdom far more villages were held by temples and brāhmanas than in the Pāla and Pratīhara dominions taken together Apart from grants of villages made singly the Rāṣṭrakūta records speak of the regrant of 400 villages by one ruler,[1] and the grant by another ruler of 1400 villages, 600 *agrahāras* and 800 villages to temples (*devakulas*) [2] Thus under the Rāstrakūtas priestly institutions rather than priests themselves seem to have emerged as important intermediaries in land, a feature not so characteristic of the Pāla and Pratīhāra territories This development seems to have taken place in Mahārāstra under the influences of the South where temples possessed more landed property than individual priests

The Pālas,[3] Pratīhāras[4] and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas maintained certain secular intermediaries in land—vassals and officials—who were rewarded with villages for services rendered to the state The epigraphic records show that their number was not as many as that of religious grantees But if religious services were rewarded with and maintained by land grants, what could have been the other possible mode of rewarding secular services, especially when coins were not in common use? Perhaps these secular land grants were as many or more than religious, but since they were not expected to endure indefinitely they were inscribed on palm-leaf or cloth and therefore have perished Probably the secular grantees were somewhat different from the religious The first were free from all taxes to the state,[5] but the second possibly paid certain tributes The first enjoyed perpetual occupancy rights over their benefices, but the second may have owned the estates only so long as they fulfilled their obligations to the king Whatever the differences between the two sets of grantees, there is no doubt that they together constituted important intermediaries in land between the king on the one hand and the

[1]A S Altekar, *The Rāstrakūtas and their times*, p 100

[2]*EI*, VII, 6, ll 46–9

[3]R S Sharma, 'Land Grants to Vassals and Officials in Northern India', *JESHO*, IV, 71–2

[4]*CII*, IV, 74, verse, *EI*, XIV, 13, l 21, ibid , III, 26, l 4

[5]In Orissa, however, taxes (*kara*) were paid by some religious grantees

actual tillers of the soil on the other For all practical purposes they became the occupiers and enjoyers of the villages, thus giving rise to a class of landed barons who grew at the cost, and with the sanction, of royal authority over land

The grantee could take advantage of the terms of the grants to acquire or increase the area of land under his direct cultivation An important feature they could exploit to their advantage was the absence of the demarcation of gift villages But the Rāstrakūta grants invariably define the boundaries of the villages given to the donees,[1] who naturally could not extend their area of cultivation The same was true of some Pāla grants Thus in the case of four villages granted by Dharmapāla in North Bengal it was difficult for the beneficiary to expand his arable land or reserve outside his estate But where this was not done his resources could enable him to extend his demesne Most Pāla and Pratīhāra charters do not specify the boundaries of the village but merely state that it was granted with its boundaries up to its pasture grounds and shrubs (*svasīmā-trna-yuti-gocara-paryantah*) Hence the grantee could push the boundaries further to add to the fields which were personally exploited by him

Another factor which contributed to the extension of the demesne of the grantee was the right of resumption of ownerless property conferred on him by the grantor The practice prevailed in certain parts of the Pratīhāra kingdom in Rājasthān According to a grant made by Mathanadeva, the local Pratīhāra governor in the Alwar region, the grantee was authorised to resume property if the daughter had no issue to inherit it (*a-putrikā-dhana*)[2] or if there was no male heir (*nastibharttā?*)[3] to succeed to inheritance The royal right of resumption was thus clearly transferred to the grantee, but occasions for the exercise of this right could not have been many

The process of individual occupation of land was carried forward by undermining the agrarian rights enjoyed by the village community In Gupta times land could not be purchased for religious grants by individuals without the consent of the local community and payment to royal officers But the Pāla kings paid

[1] *EI*, XXII, 12, ll 42–5 13, ll 56–8, *IA*, VI, 68 *EI*, XVIII, 26, ll 64–5

[2] *EI*, III, 36, l 12 Presumably it refers to the case in which the deceased donee has no sons and he has not adopted a son of his daughter as his heir

[3] Ibid , the meaning of the term seems to be obscure

only outward regard to communal rights Along with vassals and officials all the inhabitants of the village—right from the brāhmana down to the aborigines and candālas—were invoked to give their consent (*matam-astu*) to the grant made by the Pāla rulers, but that was an empty formality In fact their consent was taken for granted, and the villagers had to pay a great price for the observance of this fiction In Gupta times only the Vākātaka grants refer to the transfer of rights to the enjoyment of mines, hide and pasturage This was done by implication, for the villages were exempted from the obligation of supplying these to the state [1] But now these resources were transferred in a positive way to the beneficiaries Moreover, the practice was no longer confined to Central India, but spread to Eastern India, Uttar Pradesh, Rājasthān, Gujarāt and perhaps also to Mahārāstra Under the Pālas[2] and Pratīhāras[3] all agrarian rights such as the use of pasture grounds, fruit trees, reservoirs of water, bushes and thickets, forests, barren land, low land, land under occasional flood, etc , were transferred to the donees There was no sense in specifying these resources of the village in post-Gupta grants unless the idea was to place them at the disposal of the donees

Under the Rāṣtrakūtas, however, except for the rows of trees (*sa-vrksa-mālā-kulam*),[4] which too are mentioned in later grants, no other village resources were specifically transferred to the donees But the Rāstrakūtas did not address the inhabitants of the gift village nor did they specifically enjoin them to pay all dues and to carry out all the orders of the grantees as the Pālas and Pratīhāras did The fact that the Rāstrakūtas did not care even to notify formally the inhabitants concerned suggests that they paid scant attention to the village rights Whatever the form of the Pratīhāra charters might mean there is no doubt that the Pālas and Pratīhāras granted agrarian rights

What did this transfer mean to the villagers? The king had the power to transfer agrarian rights, but of his actual enjoyment the grants do not give any hint On the other hand in view of traces of communal ownership of land in Gupta times and the analogy of the use of pastures, etc , by the villagers as a whole in recent times,

[1]*CII*, III, 56, ll 28–9, etc
[2]*EI*, XXIX, 1, b, ll 41–2
[3]Ibid , III, 36, ll 10–11, *IA*, XVIII, p 34, ll 5–6
[4]*EI*, VII, 6, l 53

it would appear that these rights benefited the villagers They could use pasture grounds, water reservoirs, forests, etc , without making any payment to the king, similarly they could extend their arable land in the barren area But once these agrarian rights were made over to the donees, the villagers could no longer enjoy these advantages without giving some compensation to the recipients for his right of possession What use the donees made of their rights to village appurtenances and how it added to the burden of peasants can be visualised on the basis of the survivals of some fiscal practices in the nineteenth century In some parts of Oudh, where there was valuable timber on the land, the rājā levied an 'axe-tax' on the felling timber from all outsiders [1] In the same area the proprietory body did not take only the rent but also derived profits from the produce of the waste such as thatching grass, fruits, etc , and also from that of fisheries [2] The nineteenth century practices suggest that in the earlier period too the grantees levied cesses on forests, grazing grounds, fisheries, fruits, etc What is more important, the donee could claim the barren land as his family property, depriving the villagers of the opportunity of expansion if they needed more land to feed the increasing number of mouths in their families So the growth of individual occupancy rights in land among the donees at the cost of the communal agrarian rights was a significant development

While the king bartered away the communal rights to the donees and consequently created individual rights in land, sometimes the communities also made over their joint proprietory rights to temples The case of the town of Gwalior, which gave away several pieces of land to local temples,[3] is a good illustration of how communal property was turned into feudal property The fields were transferred along with the cultivators who tilled them [4] The two temples of nine Durgās and Visnu, which were endowed with fields, were built by the commander Alla,[5] and apparently the grant was made by the town under his pressure We further learn that the whole town of Sīyadoni gave a small field measuring 200 by 225 cubits (*hastas*) to Śri-Nārāyana-

[1] Baden-Powell, *Land Systems of British India* I, 128–9
[2] Ibid , II, 105
[3] *EI*, I no 20, Second Inscr , ll 2–9
[4] Ibid , l 8
[5] Ibid , l, 3 6

bhattāraka, established by a merchant, in the southern part of the town [1] This land grant was not made under any duress, but in both cases the communal landed property was converted into individual property, which tended to be feudal, because the gods and their priests would not cultivate the fields themselves but would get this done by others

Just as in the Pratihāra dominions so also in those of the Rāstrakūta land was alienated by the communities in favour of temples, and this tended to convert it into private property Thus in 865 under Amoghavarṣa I forty *mahājanas* of Elpunuse in the Dhārwār District gave to a pandita 85 *mattaras* of land [2] An inscription from Saundatti records a gift of land to a Jain temple, made with the consent of fifty agriculturists [3] In 951–52 under Krsna IV in the Dhārwār District twelve *mattaras* of land was granted for the *matha* and education, probably with the consent of fifty *mahājanas*, who undertook to protect it [4] Thus it would seem that in Karnāṭak local communities, whose leading members were known as *mahājanas*, donated part of their communal land for religious and sometimes for educational purposes, but the grantees tended to establish their individual rights in such land

The basic feature of west European feudal economy was serfdom, under which peasants were attached to the soil but did not own it In villages given as grants under the Pālas, Pratihāras and the Rāstrakūṭas the position of peasants was not materially different An important factor which tended to depress the position of peasants was the practice of subinfeudation In a Pāla grant from North Bihar an official granted land out of his possession with the permission of his overlord Vigrahapāla III (1055–70) [5] Probably as a secular beneficiary he could not do this without the sanction of the king But the religious donees, particularly the managers of big monasteries such as Nālandā, got their land cultivated by others, and their rents were collected through their agents

Under the Pratīhāras the grantees enjoyed not only powers of

[1]Ibid , i, no 21, ll, 1–4
[2]*EI*, VII, no 28, D, ll 7–16
[3]*JBBRAS*, X, 208 quoted in Altekar, op cit , 362
[4]*IA*, XII, p 258, ll 10–15
[5]Ibid , XXIX 8 ll 49–51

subinfeudation but also of eviction. In their dominions, especially in Rājasthān, Mālwa and Gujarāt, the beneficiary was given the right to cultivate his benefice or get it cultivated, to enjoy it or to get it enjoyed, to do it or get it done[2] a formula which was employed earlier by the Maitraka rulers of Valabhi.[3] It prevailed widely in the dominions of the Rāṣtrakūtas. This implies that in Rājasthān, Gujarāt and Mahārāstra the king and his religious grantees could expel tenants from land. Altekar points out that the right of ejection is not mentioned,[4] but the terms of the grant presuppose temporary tenants who hold tenure at the discretion of the grantee,[5] who can replace them and get his land cultivated by others. Although eviction could be practised by the king in the villages directly under his control, being men on the spot the grantees could exercise this right more effectively. In the Pratīhāra and Rāstrakūta dominions, therefore, the peasants did not enjoy security of tenure. Thus in many cases the people who owned the land did not cultivate it. If the law-book of Vyāsa is any guide to the organisation of agrarian economy in early mediaeval India, it would appear that in villages there were sometimes as many as four stages of intermediary landed interests between the king and the cultivator.[6]

Even the members of the ruling clan did not hold a privileged position in regard to landownership. As time passed Gurjara cultivators were also absorbed in the feudal set-up. They were made to pay all the dues which the local peasants had to pay. This is evident from a religious grant made in 960 by a feudatory, who belonged to the Gurjara-Pratīhāra line.[7] The village, which was endowed out of his personal estate Vamśapotakabhoga, was inhabited by a considerable number of Gurjara cultivators.[8] Since the grantee, in this case a guru (and his successive disciples), was

[1] Ibid., V, 24, ll. 6–9, IX, l, plates a and b.

[2] *EI*, IX, 1, plate a, l. 19, plate b, l. 63, Cf. III, p. 264, fn. 6.

[3] *CII*, IX, 2, l. 6, ll, 1. 13.

[4] Altekar, op. cit., pp. 236–7.

[5] Cf. Mirashi, *CII*, IV, CLXXI.

[6] *ksetram grhitvā yah kascinna kuryanna ca kārayet, svamine ca ṣadam dapyo rājñe dandam ca tatsamam.* Quoted in *Vyavaharamayūkha*, p. 86.

[7] *EI*, III, 36, l. 4.

[8] *sri-gurjara-vahita-samasta-ksetra-sameta-sca.* Ibid., l. 12. It is not clear whether all the inhabitants were Gurjaras.

empowered to collect from the villagers half a dozen taxes such as a share of the produce (*bhāga*), imposition on the threshing floor (*khala-bhiksā*), officer's dues (*prasthaka*), *skandhaka*, *mārgganaka*, resumption of property on failure of issue (*a-putrikā-dhana*, *nasti-bharttā*), fees on deposits (*nidhi-nidhāna*), along with all the other miscellan ous dues, proper and improper (*ucit-ānucita*)[1] these must have been imposed on the Gurjaras, first by their kinsman overlord, and then by the guru The present grant shows clearly that the vassal treated his fellow tribesmen as tools meant for his personal enjoyment, and as tillers attached to the soil, capable of being transferred along with it Further, the grantee could burden the peasants with fair and unfair taxes, which reduced them to the position of serfs Thus feudal relationships developed not only between the Gurjara-Pratihāras and the conquered population but also within the fold of the conquering tribe itself, for the conquerors regarded their kith and kin not as their equals entitled to an equal share in their spoils but as semi-serfs working for the benefit of their erstwhile tribal leaders

There are other indications that in Rājasthān the people who cultivated the land did not have any say in its transfer and that the tillers could not leave the soil in case of transfer On the one hand the beneficiary was given the right of eviction, on the other the peasants were required to stick to the soil in case of its transfer The two provisions appear to be contradictory so far as the peasants are concerned, but they clearly served the interests of the beneficiaries who enjoyed the discretion of removing or retaining the tenants The Kāman Stone Inscription of about 905–6 from the former state of Bharatpur, which formed a part of the Pratihāra kingdom certainly under Bhoja I, records eight endowments dating from 786–87 to 905–6 in favour of the local deity Siva[2] Of these Document No VI registers that in the village enjoyed by him a person named Untata piously donated three plough measures of land, which had been previously cultivated by the brāhmanas Sahulla, Jajja and others but at the time of gift was cultivated by a ploughman called Eduvāka[3] This record shows that sometimes even members of the highest vai na had to work as ordinary cultivators What makes it more significant is the fact

[1] Ibid , ll 11–12
[2] *EI*, XXIV, 329–33
[3] *eḍuvāko-dhuna yañ ca vāhayaty-eva halikah*, Ibid , 45, ll 19–21

that even a vassal enjoying a single village could transfer land to others along with the ploughmen (*hālikas*) who worked on it, and he did not have to obtain permission from his overlord This instance proves the existence of serfdom in parts of Rājasthān under the Pratīhāras Since ordinary feudatories could make over the husbandmen along with the ground, the practice may have been fairly widespread

Another factor which reduced the peasants to a state of serfdom was the extension of the practice of forced labour The term *visti*, which means impressed labour, is not mentioned in the Pāla grants However, in the Pāla kingdom the peasants were subjected to *sarva-pīdā*,[1] which the king relinquished in the villages made over to the brāhmanas, temples and monasteries [2] Whether oppressions were perpetrated on the villagers by the grantees, who took the place of the grantors, is not clear

The Pratīhāra feudatories in eastern Kāthiāwād had undoubtedly the right to levy forced labour from the villagers This was known as *visti*, and was a privilege which went with the land grant [3] The practice spread under the Maitrakas of Valabhī in Western India and continued in subsequent times in both Pratīhāra and Rāṣtrakūta dominions The term *sotapadyamānavistika* 'produces following from forced labour' or 'forced labour as occasion might arise', first used in the Maitraka charters, was directly borrowed by the Rāstrakūtas [4] In fact in no area and in no period does forced labour seem to have been as extensive as it was in Gujarāt and Mahārāstra under the Pratihāras and the Rāṣtrakūtas Surprisingly enough it prevailed precisely in the areas in which the donees were granted the right to cultivate the land, to get it cultivated, to enjoy it and to get it enjoyed Forced labour presupposes lack of manpower, for we cannot think in terms of coercion in areas which are thickly populated Whatever might be the reasons for the prevalence of forced labour, it did obtain on a considerable scale It does not, however, seem to have been a substitute for various kinds of royal revenues which are enumerated in detail in the Rāstrakūta charters Probably it supplemented them by providing labour for the construction of

[1] *EI*, XXIX, I, b, l 42
[2] Ibid , XVII, 17, l 35
[3] *IA*, XII, pp 190 ff , plate II, ll 1-24
[4] *EI*, XVIII, 26, ll 66-7, XXII, 13, l 59

forts, etc , as can be inferred from Bhattasvāmin's explanation of the term *visti* used in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya [1] It is not clear whether the grantees, like the feudal lords of Europe, exacted forced labour and compelled the peasants to work in the plots under their direct cultivation, empowered as they were to cultivate the village, or whether they continued to utilise their services for works which may be regarded as public in nature Thus we cannot decide the precise implications of the prevalence of forced labour (*utapadyamānavisti*) under the grantees At any rate the beneficiaries under the Rāstrakūtas were granted the positive right of levying forced labour from the villagers, those under the Pālas were granted the negative right of having villages free from all oppressions, but whether they were authorised to indulge in these oppressions themselves is left vague

We have no means of determining whether the direct burden on the peasants increased under the Pālas and Pratīhāras, but the formidable list of taxes imposed on them under the Gāhadavālas creates this impression Since the Pāla grants specify only a few taxes, the rest being covered by the term *ādi* (etcetera),[2] they leave clear room for the imposition by the grantees of fresh taxes on the villagers They repeatedly refer to the obligation of paying all dues (*samasta-pratyāya*) by the villagers to the grantees, but in the absence of the mention of these dues they could be multiplied and increased by the beneficiaries The same consideration applies to the Pratīhāra grants which transferred all sources of revenue (*sarv-āya-sameta*), but did not name them In some parts of the Pratīhāra kingdom (in Rājasthān) the villagers were asked to pay proper and improper, fixed and not fixed, dues to the grantees [3] Thus empowered the grantees could levy from the villagers taxes other than those which were customary

In contrast to the Pāla and Pratīhāra grants their Rāṣtrakūṭa counterparts show precision in transferring revenues and do not leave any scope for increasing the customary dues or charging any additional dues on the part of the grantee But the beneficial effect of this definition is counteracted by the imposition of at least seven to eight varieties of taxes on the villagers These are *udranga*, *uparikara*, *bhūta-vāta-pratyāya*, *dhānya*, *hiranya*, *danda-*

[1] *JBORS* XII, pt I, 198
[2] *EI* XXIX, 7, l 42
[3] Ibid , XII, 36, l 12

das–āparādha, and of course *utpadyamāna-visti* Whatever these terms might mean in concrete terms, surely each one of them stands for a tax, and all taken together are indicative of the heavy burdens imposed on the Rāstrakūta peasants, who continued to pay all these dues even when the villages were transferred to the donees, although the latter did not have the same freedom of action as those under the Pālas and Pratihāras

Thus under the grantees the villagers not only suffered from loss of traditional agrarian rights but also from subinfeudation and subleasing, eviction leading to insecure tenancy rights, imposition of forced labour, levy of additional taxes, and forcible attachment to the ground In some areas the beneficiary was empowered to evict the peasants as well as to make them stick to the soil The two provisions sound contradictory in relation to the peasants, but they clearly served the interests of the donees who were left free to remove or retain the tenants All these factors rendered the economic subjection of peasants in benefices as complete as that of their European counterparts

What strikes us forcibly about the grants is the absence of any legal method or machinery by which the peasants could secure redress of their grievances against the grantees Almost all Pāla and Pratīhāra grants enjoin the villagers to fulfil their obligations towards the grantees by paying them all dues and carrying out their orders They also instruct the royal successors and other potential violators of the grants to observe the terms and conditions under the threat of damning spiritual consequences That this actually worked in practice is evident from the restoration by Bhoja of two *agrahāra* villages, which had slipped from the grasp of the grantees under his predecessors But we have no trace whatsoever of any obligation of the grantees towards the villagers who were placed under their control If they chose to levy new taxes or enhance the existing ones, where could the peasants seek relief? Naturally, if the grantees adopted oppressive measures, the villagers might be thrown into a state of helplessness, leading to their greater subjection

In villages independent of temporal[1] and religious grants taxes were assessed and realised by royal officials We do not know whether the royal officials exacted any dues for their own

[1]The term temporal has been used for want of a better expression for non-religious or service grants

maintenance from the peasants, but certain dues were levied from the villagers for the maintenance of the royal family under the Pālas In any case the regular and irregular soldiers and policemen supplemented their earnings with the provisions supplied by the villagers, otherwise there could be no point in exempting the benefices from the entry of such royal agents. As old as the time of the Guptas, the billeting of *cāṭas* and *bhaṭas* on the villages covered Bengal, Bihar, Bundelkhand and Chambā during our period We do not have any precise idea of its operation in earlier times, but what we know of the implications of the entry of the *cātas* and *bhatas* from a record of Chambā (975) shows that villages under the direct control of the king in other parts of the country may also have suffered heavily from the exactions of these royal retainers The Chambā inscription shows that the *cātas* and *bhatas* could enter the house of a peasant, appropirate a portion of raw and ripe crops, sugarcane, salt and cow's milk, carry off stools, benches or cots, and seize his wood, fuel, grass, chaff, etc [1] There is no reason to believe that they behaved otherwise in other areas

Feudalisation of trade and commerce was an important development in the economy under the Pālas and Pratīhāras The markets attached to four villages were made over under Dharmapāla to a grantee,[2] who would not allow as much of a free hand to the traders as the state would do Several such instances are found under the Pratīhāras The most prominent example is that of about thirty-four horse-dealers, who, assembling from different parts of the country at Pehoa, promised to pay a fixed sum of two drammas on the sale of every horse, mule, etc , to six temples [3] It is not clear whether the horse-dealers paid the king any customs over and above what they paid to the temples This might suggest that customs were transferred to the gods under royal pressure Again, Undabhata, the governor of Sīyaḍoni, made over a fixed part of the customs levied on goods to the temple of Visnu [4] Similiarly incomes from at least sixteen shops were allotted by several merchants to the temple of Viṣṇu at the

[1] *ASR*, 1902-3, pp 252-3, ll 22-4
[2] *EI* IV, 34, ll, 52-3
[3] Ibid , I, 23, ll 1-17
[4] Ibid , 21, ll 4-7

same place [1] A land grant made to the temple of Lacchukeśvara in Rājasthān carried with it the levy of three *vimsopakas* on every sack of grain brought for sale in the market and two *vimśopakas* per mensem from every shop [2] In the Rāstrakūta dominions grants of royal income from crafts are not recorded, but local guilds granted their income for religious purposes Thus in 793 the headman of a guild of weavers at Laxmesvar agreed to make a contribution of the proportionate quantity of the goods turned out by the weavers for a religious gift [3] In 880 a similar gift was made by four heads of a guild belonging to 360 towns [4] Such grants may also have been made by the rulers, as was done in the Pāla and Partihāra dominions We do not know whether royal income from tolls and customs was transferred to vassals and officials for their services But they were certainly granted to temples in return for spiritual benefit

Transfer of royal income from trade and commerce to the religious beneficiaries was a new development in this period In post-Maurya and Gupta times deposits in cash were made with the guilds, and religious needs were met out of the interest accruing on them, so that religious bodies did not enjoy any control over the management of the donated amount The old practice was continued under the Pratihāras, who of course deposited money with the heads of guilds and not the guilds But, what is more important, there also began the practice of transferring tolls levied on sale of commodities or on shops to the temples Thus the temples came to wield some control over the economic activities of the artisans and merchants which they could regulate in their narrow interests

A basic characteristic of feudal economy was local needs locally satisfied, which did not leave scope for specialised production for market This seems to be true of villages under the Pālas and Pratīhāras The Jātakas mention craft villages, but whatever little information we have about the composition of the village population under the Pālas suggests that these were not inhabited only by agriculturists but by all varieties of people from

[1] Ibid , ll, 13–34
[2] Ibid , III, 36, ll, 22–3
[3] *EI*, VI, 16, ll 1–12
[4] *JBBRAS*, X, 192 quoted ibid

brāhmanas to Medas, Andhras and candālas [1] A Pratihāra grant shows that villages near Alwar were populated by artisans, merchants and cultivators [2] The Pāla and Pratīhāra lists of taxes in the countryside show that they could not possibly be levied from the peasants alone, only artisans and traders of the village could pay *kara*, *hiranya*, etc Thus for the upkeep of the self-sufficient economy of the village it was necessary that all sections of primary producers should live in the village Even the backward, tribal peoples carried on economic activities useful to the village In the Pāla villages candālas may have worked in hide and provided shoes, etc , while the Medas and Andhras probably served as agricultural labourers

Monasteries and temples formed wider economic units According to the terms of the Nālandā grant of Devapāla five villages were given for providing articles for worship, clothing, bedding, food and medicine of the monks, and the repair of the monastery [3] There is no reason to think that all these items were met out of the cash rents realised from villagers In all probability some villages supplied grain, etc , others cloth, and still others requisite labour for the repair of buildings, or else every village furnished part of these articles Whatever might be the nature of the arrangement in detail, the villages helped sustain the self-sufficient economy of the big monasteries by making various kinds of services available to them

In some temples of Rājasthān under the Pratihāras self-sufficiency in economic resources was secured by consolidating their holdings in land[4] and ensuring the regular supply of necessary articles from the artisans We know of oilmen (*tailakas*) making voluntary gifts of a fixed measure of oil per oilmill to a temple [5] Other artisans were forcibly attached to the temple to cater for its economic needs Thus the local Pratihara governor Mathanadeva imposed a tax of two *palikās* from every jar (*ghatakūpaka*) of clarified butter and oil, and fifty leaves from

[1]Craft villages mentioned in the *Jātakas*, and warrior villages mentioned in the *AS*

[2]*EI* III, 36, ll 5–6, 22–3

[3]Ibid , XXIII, 47, ll 39–40

[4]*EI*, XIV, p 177

[5]Ibid I, 21, ll 27–8, 30–1

every Collika for the temple of Lacchukeśvara in Rājasthān[1] Obviously neither the donor nor the temple possessed sufficient cash for the purpose, and so artisans were compelled to supply a part of their produce to it

Some towns also seem to have been self-sufficient inasmuch as they owned land from which they procured their food Artisans living in such towns were not quite free to pursue their trades as they wished Under the Pratīhāras we find the headmen of the oilmen (*tailikas*), betel-sellers (*tāmbūlikas*), distillers (*kallapāla*), and garland-makers (*mālikā-mahara*) making endowments, and sometimes accepting deposits on behalf of their guilds[2] Earlier epigraphs represent the whole guild as accepting deposits, but according to the Pratīhāra epigraphs this function had devolved on the chiefs In consultation with royal agents the head of a guild could impose taxes on its members and undertake transactions on its behalf This shows that in towns artisans could not function independently but were attached to their chiefs in the same manner as the peasants to their lords in the benefices This meant lack of mobility, which was an important feature of closed urban economy

Another indication of the existence of local economic units, particularly in the Pratīhāra dominions, is found in the prevalence of local weights and measures, some of which are mentioned in the Sīyadoni inscription It seems that *mani*, *tāli* and *tulā* were local measures of weight[3] The Gwalior region had its own land measure, which obtained in that area,[4] and the local land measure was determined according to the hand of the emperor (*parameśvarīya*)[5] We know of local land measures in Eastern India under the Guptas and Senas They also existed under the Pālas Political fragmentation did not favour the evolution of uniform weights and measures, which prevented the development of country-wide trade and commerce

That trade and commerce was not vigorous in the period can be inferred from the diminished use of coins The only Pāla grant which mentions the use of drammas is an inscription of Dhar-

[1]Ibid, III, 36, ll 22–3
[2]*EI*, I 20, Second Inscr, ll 11–20
[3]B N Puri, *The History of the Gurjara-Pratiharas*, pp 136–7
[4]*EI*, I, 20, ll 8–9
[5]Ibid, l 4

mapāla, according to which in 801 a tank was constructed at Gaya at the cost of 3000 drammas, but no coins can be attributed with any certainty to any Pāla king Recent excavations at a Pāla site near Colgong in Bhagalpur have exposed some cowries but no coins In view of the continuity of the Pāla rule for nearly four centuries scholars find it hard to explain the near absence of coins in their kingdom,[1] but it is not surprising if we bear in mind the general nature of the economy prevalent in early mediaeval India

The Pratīhāra inscriptions mention several categories of coins such as dramma, *pāda*, *vimsopaka*, *rūpaka*, *pana*, *kākinī*, and *kapardaka* [2] Of these the last was the cowrie, which could not be of much use in considerable transactions According to Sulaiman, cowries were the medium of exchange in the country of Ruhmi and trade was carried through it [3] The dramma was the only coin capable of undermining the self-sufficient economy of the Pratīhāra kingdom Drammas seen to have been in use in Rājasthān in the seventh century An inscription of 608 from Mārwār makes the earliest mention of the dramma [4] But under the Pratīhāras we do not know of any drammas earlier than the ninth century A D Refined silver drammas bearing the device of Ādi-Varāha are attributed to Mihira Bhoja (836–85), and the debased ones are attributed to his two immediate successors, Mahendrapāla (885–910) and Bhoja II (910–14), but not with certainty, recently some coins of Vināyakapāla (914–43), grandson of Mihira Bhoja, have been discovered [5] They came to be known later as Vināyakamudrā in contrast to the Varāhamudrā of Bhoja I, in the *Dravyaparīksa* of Thakkura Pheru,[6] which shows that the two varieties were issued in considerable quantity But the number of coins hitherto discovered is small Thus the literary and epigraphic sources seem to support the hypothesis that the dramma was not used in any appreciable quantity earlier than the

[1] *History of Bengal*, I p 668 It is thought that gold coins were used profusely in Assam during the same period, but much cannot be made of only epigraphic references to coins in that region

[2] Puri, op cit, pp 134–6

[3] Ibid, p 136

[4] Asahaya whose commentary on the *Narada Smrti* may be assigned to the eighth century, refers to 1 lac of drammas (*JNSI*, VII, 66) Reference to the dramma in the Bakhshali manuscript may have been earlier

[5] *JNSI*, X, 28–30

[6] Ibid, 29

ninth century A D Its use increased only from the tenth century onwards Moreover, the inscriptions show that the use of the dramma was restricted to towns such as Sīyadoni Furthermore, the coins that have been identified as drammas and recovered so far are negligible in number There are about two hundred Ādi-Varāha and Vigrahapāla coins in the Lucknow Museum, about twenty Ādi-Varāha coins in silver and copper in the Indian Museum, and a few in the Baroda Museum [1] These coins in no way compare with the large number of coins from post-Maurya and Gupta times At any rate they were not numerous enough to break through the shell of the closed economy prevalent in those times [2]

The fact that no coins can be attributed with certainty to the Pālas and very few to the Pratīhāras suggests that some coins discovered from this period and others mentioned in the contemporary inscriptions may have been issued by local bodies or groups of merchants who were authorised to do so by their respective rulers This may be true of the *gadhaiyā paisā*, which appeared in Rājasthān possibly in the tenth century and became current in the eleventh and twelfth centuries The *pañciyaka-dramma* referred to in the Sīyaḍoni inscription of the tenth century is taken by Bhandarkar to mean a coin struck by the local panchāyat [3] That some drammas had local names in earlier times can be inferred from the use of Bhillamāla or Srimāliya drammas of later times [4] Thus the issue of coins of local bodies, towns or merchants indicates the disintegration of central power and the prevalence of local economic units

Further proof of the use of coins is found in epigraphic references to the purchase of shops In the Pratīhāra kingdom eight inscriptions ranging from 864 to 904 refer to the purchase of shops for cash made by the management of temples [5] But during this period hardly any coin series can be definitely associated with the ruling dynasties of the Pālas, Pratīhāras and Rāstrakūtas, not to speak of minor dynasties, a state of affairs very

[1]Ibid , p 153

[2]The present study, however, excludes Kashmir and Afghanistan where coins seem fairly numerous

[3]*JNSI*, XVII, 70–1 Now it is thought to be 1/4 dramma

[4]*JNSI*, XVII, 74–5

[5]*EI*, XIX, 7, pp 52–8

different from that prevailing in the days of the Indo-Greeks, Kusānas, Sātavāhanas, Ksatrapas, and above all the Guptas However, the available coins, and the references to them in the Pratihāra inscriptions, convey the impression that the Pratīhāra economy was not so closed as its Pāla counterpart There are also some other indications of mobility and economic intercourse At least at two places in the Pratīhāra kingdom merchants from different parts of the country gathered,—horse-dealers at Pehoa and general merchants at Āhār Moreover, some merchants migrated from place to place This mobility of merchants must have weakened the feudal economy under the Pratīhāras

It is remarkable that not a single Rāstrakūta coin has been discovered so far although they ruled for over two hundred years, although their kingdom touched the sea-coast, and although the term *hiranya* is repeatedly mentioned in their land charters Altekar considers this to be a strange phenomenon,[1] but the same is true of the Pālas to whom not a single coin can be ascribed indisputably in spite of their rule for about four centuries The conspicuous absence of Rāstrakūta coins can be appreciated if we remind ourselves of the nature of mediaeval economy The lack of coins has been explained by Altekar himself when he states that land tax in the Rāstrakūta kingdom was mostly paid in kind, as in the Ganga and Cola dominions [2] Of course, the Cambay plates of Govinda IV mention a gift of 1400 villages (600 *agrahāras* and 800 villages) yielding an annual revenue of seven lacs of *suvarnas*,[3] but this is just an estimate of the annual income in terms of money Probably assessment was made in terms of cash, but collection in kind

The articles handled by the merchants under Pālas and Pratīhāras were not of day-to-day use, touching the life of the common people Certainly trade in horses, betel, etc , could not affect the rural economy The only important necessity of daily use required by the villages was salt The Siyadoni inscription leads us to suppose that in the Pratīhāra kingdom salt merchants were the most important of all dealers It mentions as many as seven *nemika-vanikas*, some credited with the establishment of

[1] *The Rāstrakutas and Their Times*, p 364
[2] Ibid , p 227, cf p 140
[3] *EI*, VII, 6, 11 47–9

temples and others with their endowments If the economy had not been self-sufficient, dealers in grain and cloth would have been more important Even people living in towns owned land in the neighbourhood, and probably depended on the produce received from such land This seems to be true of traders living in Sīyadonī[1] and Gwalior[2] It is a strong indication of the self-sufficient rural economy that of the various kinds of merchants those dealing in salt appear as the most important under the Pratīhāras The only other important merchants in the Pratīhāra records are the oilmen or *tailakas*, whose presence again reflects a self-sufficient economy Probably every village did not produce all the oil necessary for cooking and lighting, which had to be supplied by the oilmen

To conclude we can sum up four broad developments in early mediaeval economy (i) growth of individual ownership of land at the cost of royal and communal ownership, (ii) subjection of peasantry through subinfeudation, eviction, and imposition of non-customary taxes and forced labour, (iii) conversion of income from trade and crafts into benefices, and finally (iv) the existence of a self-sufficient economy butressed by lesser use of coins and comparative absence of trade All these may be regarded as features of feudal economy under the Pālas, Rāṣṭrakūtas and Pratīhāras Of these the existence of intermediaries in land, whose number increased enormously during this period, may be regarded an old feudal phenomenon The same is true of the subjection of peasantry through various processes, with the difference that subleasing, eviction and forced labour were intensified in Rājasthān, Gujarāt and Mahārāṣṭra These processes backed by religious propaganda carried on by the beneficiaries were in the nature of extra-economic methods employed for the exploitation of the peasantry which started in the earlier period But the loss of agrarian and communal rights by the villagers leading to the growth of individual rights in land, feudalisation of crafts and commerce, and paucity of coins appear to have been new traits in the economy of the period Some of the developments, especially the growth of individual rights in land, can be better appreciated if we examine the legal basis of land grants in early mediaeval times

[1] *EI*, i, 21, ll 3–4

[2] Ibid , 20, Second Inscr , l 3

CHAPTER IV

EARLY MEDIAEVAL LAND RIGHTS
(*c* A D 500–1200)

The problem of land rights in early India has been enmeshed in the controversy between imperialist and nationalist historians In order to justify land legislation in British India administrator scholars sought to prove the existence of royal ownership of land in ancient India [1] The theory was upheld by Maine and supported even by serious orientalists such as Buhler,[2] Hopkins, Macdonell and Keith, and V A Smith [3] In 1904 V A Smith stated in his popular textbook that 'the native law of India has always recognised agricultural land as being crown property' [4] Completely one-sided, such an approach aroused a similar reaction on the part of nationalist historians such as P N Banerjee[5] and K P Jayaswal The latter tried to refute this theory and prove the individual ownership of land,[6] apparently to withstand the onslaughts of the British on the right of the big land-holders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries The nationalist theory of Jayaswal was, however, countered by Ghoshal, but he did not proceed beyond the interpretation of certain passgaes quoted by the former in support of his theory [7] The subject has been treated recently by some other scholars,[8] mainly on the theoretical plane Although these studies have brought to light most legal texts bearing on the ownership or possession of land,

[1] As Kane puts it, being more convenient and paying the theory of state ownership of land was adopted by the British Government in their policy and legislation *HDS*, II, 866

[2] *SBE*, XXV, 259–60, note on *Manu*, VIII 39

[3] *Early History of India* (Oxford, 1904), p 123, *Oxford History of India*, p 90

[4] *Early History of India*, (Oxford, 1904), p 123

[5] *Public Administration in Ancient India*, p 179

[6] *Hindu Polity*, 2nd edn , pp 343–51

[7] *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other Essays*, Essay VI, pp 158–66

[8] S K Maity, *Economic Life of Northern India in Gupta Period*, pp 11–23 L Gopal, *JESHO*, IV, 240–63

these have not been interpreted in any chronological order, let alone in the context of the political and economic developments of the period to which they belong No attempt has been made to approach the problem in terms of changes, if any, in the idea of land rights, and no line of demarcation in this respect has been drawn between the ancient period and the mediaeval period, which in our opinion begins from the end of the Gupta age What has made the study of this question more difficult is that, guided by recent practice, modern scholars always think in terms of absolute rights in land and ignore the possibility of the varying rights of various parties, based more on custom than on any well-established law

Since in the treatment of the subject the evidence for early mediaeval times has not been examined separately, we propose to confine our study mainly to this period It may help to clarify our understanding if we examine the various forms of land rights, communal, royal and individual, one by one

From Vedic down to Gupta times the ancient Indian texts show consciousness of communal rights in land According to a later Vedic text, the *Aitareya-Brāhmana*, the Earth protested against the action of Viśvakarman Bhauvana, who donated land to the priests as sacrificial fee [1] It seems that in Vedic times no land could be donated without the consent of the clan,[2] and except the case of Viśvakarman.Bhauvana no clear instance of the gift of land, even with the consent of the clan, is known in Vedic times Gautama, a lawgiver of post-Vedic times, lays down that what is considered as livelihood (*yoga-ksema*) cannot be divided [3] This obviously includes land, which according to this rule cannot be divided among the members of the family In the same passge of Gautama the term is taken to mean property destined for pious uses and sacrifices, but this seems to be a later interpretation [4]

In post-Vedic times, alongside clan rights in land, there developed the rights of those who did not belong to the clan With the formation of villages peopled by members of various clans and crafts, the village community came to acquire some rights in land The individual appropriation of land was subject to

[1]VIII, 21
[2]*CHI*, I, 118
[3]XXVIII, 46
[4]*SBE*, II, fn 46 on XXVIII, 46

some effective communal control Probably the old communal, antialienising feeling regarding the disposal of land persisted in the villages in pre-Maurya times [1]

The idea of communal rights in land is fully confirmed by an important Sanskrit text on logic, the *Mimāmsā Sūtra* of Jaimini, assignable to the fourth-third century B C It states that in the Viśvajit sacrifice, in which the sacrificer has to donate all his belongings, even an emperor cannot give away the whole land of which he may be the ruler, for the earth is common to all [2] This has been taken by scholars to establish the right of the individual in land,[3] but the statement is obviously intended to convey the contrast between the private rights of one and the public rights of many Sabara Svāmin, who commented on this passage in the fourth century A D , argues that others have as much right over the earth as the king,[4] which implies the theory of joint rights in land

So far as the brāhmana clans are concerned several mediaeval texts repeatedly stress that amongst other things land and water belonging to persons having a common ancestor (*sagotras*) are indivisible up to the thousandth generation [5] This obviously refers to the state of affairs before Gupta times, for no pre-Gupta law-book provides for the partition of land in connection with the laws of inheritance But once the law of partition of land had been clearly written into Gupta and post-Gupta Dharmaśāstras, the old provision regarding the impartibility of land sounded incongruous The commentators got round this anomaly simply by ignoring the obvious and literal meaning of the passage The *Mitākṣarā*[6] and the *Madanapārijāta*[7] argued that the provision regarding the indivisible land (*ksetra*) of the brāhmana clan applied only to the kṣatriya and other sons born of the brāhmana, which implies that the brāhmana sons could divide the landed property among themselves This clearly illustrates how the provision regarding clan rights in land was cleverly twisted in favour of individual rights although these were denied to the ksatriya and other

[1] *CHI*, I, 178

[2] VI 7 3 quoted in *DK*, I, 793

[3] K P Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, 2nd edn , p 345

[4] On Jaimini, VI, 7 3, quoted in *DK*, I, 793

[5] *DK*, I, 1231

[6] *yat-t-ūsanasā kṣetraṣy-avibhājyatvam-uktam-avibhājyam-iti tad-brāhman-otpanna-kṣatriy-ādi-putrā-viṣayam* *DK*, I, 1232

[7] Ibid , 1231

non-brāhmana sons of the brāhmana on grounds of caste Devannabhaṭṭa, a lawgiver of about the thirteenth century, seems to accept the interpretation of the *Mitākṣarā*, and commenting on the crucial passage baldly states that land can be divided, but he adds that this can only be done with the consent of all the kinsmen (*akhiladāyād-ānumatyā*)[1] Thus what is merely implied by the *Mitākṣarā* is declared in unequivocal terms by the *Smṛticandrikā* of Devannabhaṭṭa Hence the legal texts of the eleventh-thirteenth centuries clearly provide for the break-up of landed property owned by the brāhmana families And what applied to brāhmana families may also have been true of other families

The laws regarding settlement of boundary disputes and sale of land give the community a strong voice in land transactions In settling boundary disputes the law-books enjoin mediation by kinsmen (*jñāti*) and neighbours (*sāmantas*) but also admit the evidence of cultivators, artisans and even hunters Land for sale can be transferred only with the consent of the village, *jñāti* and *dāyādas*[2] Further, in the sale of land near kinsmen, neighbours and creditors (*dhanikāh*) have to be considered in order of preference,[3] then the kinsmen in general (*sakulyas*), and if none of all these is available men of other castes can be thought of[4]

It is laid down by Bṛhaspati that when the king makes the gift of a field (it is not clear whether a secular or religious gift), he should inform the knowers of four Vedas, merchants, headmen, all villagers, elders, owners and royal officers,[5] an instruction which is usually followed in the land charters and indicates some interest of the inhabitants of the village in land In the Gupta period in a land transaction for religious purposes the consent of the village assembly had to be obtained Similarly in the ninth century a town near Gwalior granted to a temple some land which it held in common Such examples of the exercise of communal rights are few But certainly the form was maintained even by powerful kings, who addressed the grants not only to their officers and vassals but also to humbler folk including candālas, Medas and Andhras Some

[1] Ibid , 1232

[2] *DK*, I, 901 (*sva-grāma-jñāti-sāmanta-dāyād-ānumatena ca*)

[3] Bharadvāja quoted in *DK*, I, 900

[4] Ibid

[5] *rājā kṣetram datva cāturvaidya-vanig-vārika-sarva-grāmina-tan-mahattara-svami-purus-ādhiṣthitam paricchindyat*, quoted in *DK*, I, 949

grants from Bengal and Orissa sought the consent of all, others merely informed all categories of the village population of the transfer This was evidently a survival of the communal rights of earlier days when land was owned jointly by the members of a tribe But even when the tribe had disintegrated into castes and different tribes had coalesced to form one village the old form was retained

It was under the pretext of communal welfare that land was enjoyed by the priests and temples An important reason why sale was permitted for religious purposes was that the temple was supposed to function in the interest of the community Apparently not only the priests but also the lay devotees partook of the offerings made in connection with the *bali* and *sattra*, for which land was granted to the temples Even now offerings made to the gods are distributed among the villagers who congregate around the local temple on the occasion of the daily and periodical worship It is likely that in ancient times a major part of the offerings was distributed among the devotees Gradually the priests appropriated the lion's share and shared only a small portion of the produce of the donated land with their real benefactors

So far as pasture grounds are concerned two pre-Gupta lawgivers, Manu and Visnu, clearly lay down[1] that grazing land cannot be partitioned Communal rights in water reservoirs, etc , are indicated by the provision that *udaka* cannot be divided [2] Inscriptions indirectly show that the people had some such rights, but later laws and grants contrived to undermine these

Communal rights in land seem to have been first curtailed by the king The Visvakarman passage is clear evidence that this was happening very early It evidently represents the traditional view which did not like the way kings were arrogating increasing rights to themselves The king, as the representative of the community, was gradually clothed with the rights enjoyed by it, although his authority could never be absolute In any event whatever little of clan or communal rights in land remained in early mediaeval times was undermined by the growth of royal and individual

[1] *DK*, I, 1209

[2] Ibid , 1204, 1206, 1209

rights, which process is attested by both the law-books and the land charters of the period

Those who argue for the existence of royal ownership of land in early India try to stretch the evidence over the whole period, little realising that most law-books which stress royal rights belong to early mediaeval times Kautilya recommends royal control of agriculture,[1] but he nowhere enunciates the theory of ownership of land by the king Manu seems to have been the first authority to speak in general terms of the supreme power of the king over the earth, which does not necessarily imply royal ownership of land According to him the king is entitled to half a share of the ore dug out of mines, as he is the lord of the earth and gives protection [2] This is somewhat different from the older theory which adduces no other ground for levying taxes than giving protection to the people The first clear statement of royal possession is made by a late Gupta lawgiver Kātyāyana, who declares the king to be the owner of the earth (*bhūsvāmin*) and consequently the claimant to one-fourth of the produce [3] However, he admits that because they dwell on the land human beings are declared to be the owners of it (in ordinary parlance),[4] and so dilutes his theory of the royal ownership of land with that of the ownership by ordinary inhabitants

A similar position is taken by Nārada, who authorises the king to deprive the peasant of his field and house but at the same time advises him not to resort to such a drastic measure, for these two constitute the means of the subsistence of the householder [5] Explaining the second injunction of Nārada, Asahāya states that the king should acquire his own (*svam*) by giving seeds, etc , to the peasant,[6] which implies that relief to the peasants can ensure the collection of the royal share of the produce The pretence in favour of the peasants is given up by the commentator to the *Narasimha Purāna*, who states that the land belonged to the king

[1]AŚ, II 24
[2]VIII, 39
[3]*Katyayanasmrti*, verse 16
[4]Verse 17
[5]XI, 27, 42
[6]On *Nar* XIV 42 quoted in *DK* I, 949

and not to the cultivators [1] Bhattasvāmin, who flourished some time in the twelfth century, quotes a significant passage in his commentary on Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* According to it those who are well versed in the śāstras admit that the king is the owner of both land and water and that the people can exercise their right of ownership over all things except these two [2] This passage accords well with the view of the commentator of the *Narasimha Purāna* and contrasts the rights of the king with those of his subjects,[3] instead of subordinating the right of the subject in the soil to those of the king it completely does away with them Since the crucial passage occurs in the context of taxes from irrigation, its citation by Bhattasvāmin is obviously intended to justify taxation on the grounds of ownership

Although a private individual was allowed to lease his land to tenants, as known from the law-books, the king could superimpose his own rights over that land Yājñavalkya (II, 158)[4] lays down that if the cultivator does not cultivate after having taken the field, he shall be compelled to pay the owner's share, nothing is said about the royal share But in such a case Bṛhaspati [5] and Vyāsa[6] enjoin the tenant to pay the due share not only to the landowner (*svāmin*) but also an equivalent fine to the king Of course, neglect of cultivation means loss in revenue, but for this the king should hold the landowner responsible and not the tenant The fact that he enters into direct dealings with the tenants shows that he enjoys some general authority over their land Normally Nārada permits legal title to the land if it has been enjoyed for three generations But here also royal rights infringe

[1]Quoted in M A Buch, *Economic Life in Ancient India*, II, 24f (quoting from Lees, *Land and Labour of India*, pp 111–14) Also Sen, *Hindu Jurisprudence*, p 52f The same inference may be drawn from the commentary of the *Mitakṣara* on *Yaj*, I 318 According to it the privilege of making a gift of land or of a *nibandha* belonged only to the king and not to the governor of a province or a district under the king

[2]*AŚ* (4th edn), tr , p 144

[3]Ghoshal, *Historiography and other Essays*, p 160 Confirmation of the theory of royal ownership of land is provided by the *Manasollāsa*, I, (*GOS*, XXVIII), Ch III, verse 361, which declares the king to be the lord (*iśvara*) of all wealth, especially of that which is stored inside the earth

[4]*DK*, I, 943

[5]Ibid , I, 954

[6]Ibid , 961

individual rights, for such a piece of land can be transferred to another person through royal favour (*rāja-prasādāt*) So on the one hand the king is authorised to deprive a person of his land and house even if they have been under occupation for sixty years, on the other he is empowered to assign them to another person Such a provision has in view the transfer of land by the king from one assignee to the other

From the Gupta period onwards the Chinese travellers Fa-hsien and Hsuan Tsang record that land belonged to the king While the actual position might differ from king to king, there is little to doubt that in early mediaeval times there existed a strong school favouring the royal ownership of land K P Jayaswal takes the theory of the royal ownership of land in ancient India as a part of the feudal law,[1] but so far as the Gupta and post-Gupta legal texts are concerned, the evidence for royal ownership of land cannot be ignored Its only critic was Sabara, who flourished some time in the third-fourth century A D and belonged to the school of Jaimini

It may be argued that the king enjoyed only usufructuary rights which were transferred to the donee This may be true of the early grants, which make over certain sources of revenues in the villages But the post-Gupta grants transfer villages along with its water, paths, fertile, infertile and low land, trees, grass, etc, which, in the case of Maratha grants, has been taken by the modern Indian courts to have conferred on the grantee ownership in the soil itself,[2] on the other hand where these concessions are not specified the grant is considered to be of the royal share of the revenue only [3] The same interpretation should apply to early mediaeval land grants If the king did not enjoy ownership in the soil how could he transfer it to others?

The king may have acquired rights over the soil as the representative of the community, but he was never conscious of it in early mediaeval times In this sense royal ownership was not identical with state ownership The kings, who made grants in all parts of their kingdoms, always did so with the avowed object of

[1]*Hindu Polity* (2nd edn), 349 He quotes Wilks (*History of Mysore*, 1869) as showing that no foundation exists for attributing the feudal theory to Hindu Law (ibid)

[2]*HDS*, II, 865–6

[3]Ibid, III, 855, fn 2031 for case references

securing religious merit for themselves and their parents, they never cared for the spiritual benefit of the community and the kingdom Hence land was granted by them in their individual capacity, as private landowners

The Vedic, post-Vedic, Maurya and post-Maurya texts indicate the appropriation and occupation of cultivable land by private individuals, representing mainly joint or extended patriarchal families But except for gift for religious purposes the early sources do not authorise the individual to alienate his land for any other purpose In other words the other usual characteristics of ownership such as sale, mortgage, partition, inheritance, etc , do not apply to arable land These attributes of ownership are known to some pre-Gupta lawgivers such as Gautama[1] and Manu,[2] but neither they nor other lawgivers such as Apastamba, Baudhāyana, Vasiṣṭha and Visnu allow an individual the power of alienating or acquiring land by gift, sale, mortgage, partition, etc It is only from the Gupta period onwards that the law-books lay down provisions regarding partition, sale, mortgage, adverse possession, and lease of land

Although the pre-Gupta law-books provide detailed laws regarding partition, they do not specify land in this context It is Brhaspati,[3] a lawgiver of the later Gupta period, who clearly states that in partition land cannot be given to a śūdra son of a higher caste father, a view repeated by Devala,[4] a lawgiver of about A D 600–900 Kātyāyana,[5] a near contemporary of Brhaspati, declares that when the field, garden, houses, etc , are partitioned the eldest should get either the southern or the western part Śankha-Likhita, whose law-book was compiled some time between A D 600–900, states that if somebody acquires by dint of his labour land that had been lost, he should get one fourth more, and the rest should be equally divided among the sharers [6] These rules leave no doubt about the partition of land from Gupta times

Even pasture land, made indivisible by Manu[7] and Visnu,[8] is

[1]X, 39
[2]X, 115
[3]*DK*, I, 1251
[4]Ibid , 1252
[5]Ibid , 1201
[6]Ibid , 1207 with the com of *Smrticandrika*
[7]IX 219 The term used for pasture ground according to Medhatithi is *pracara*
[8]XVIII, 44

pronounced to be divisible by Brhaspati [1] The legal sanction for the partition of pasture grounds is significant, because vast stretches of land owned by joint families could be brought under private possession by this means Thus from the end of the Gupta period onwards land could be partitioned among individuals, who were given separate possessions over it

A second indication of the growth of individual rights in land is provided by the law regarding sale Kautilya prescribes rules regarding the sale of homestead and houses (*vāstu-vikraya*),[2] but he does not refer to the sale of land, which was apparently not in vogue in Maurya times Similarly the detailed rules regarding sale and purchase in the pre-Gupta law-books do not mention land as a commodity Even some Gupta lawgivers such as Yājñavalkya and Nārada do not refer to the sale of land These two set varying periods for the examination of the things purchased, i e , iron and clothes, milch cattle, beasts of burden, jewels, all sorts of grain, male and female slaves, but they do not include land in this category [3] Brhaspati seems to have been the first lawgiver to lay down rules regarding the sale of land,[4] and he is followed by Kātyāyana and others Kātyāyana ordains that if a field which has been given, purchased or pledged becomes useless, one of equal value should be given [5] If the vendor is incapable of doing this he should give satisfaction in other ways [6] Kātyāyana further enjoins that land intended for purchase should be carefully examined,[7] an instruction repeated by later lawgivers [8] Kātyāyana lays down that tax-bearing land should be sold for the purpose of paying taxes,[9] which implies that the peasant could be compelled to sell a part of his land for the clearance of his dues

Some other provisions of Brhaspati,[10] Bharadvāja,[11] and

[1] *DK*, I, 2, 1223 The term *pracāra* is explained by Aparārka as *pravesa-nirgama-bhūh* (ibid)

[2] III, 9

[3] *Yāj* , II, 177, *Nār* , *XII*, 5–6

[4] *DK*, I, 896

[5] Ibid , 767

[6] Ibid

[7] Ibid , 896

[8] Ibid , 899

[9] Ibid , I, 898

[10] Ibid , 895

[11] Ibid , 757 They refer here to the unauthorised sale of land

Aparārka [1] clearly show that land was liable to sale in early mediaeval times Brhaspati provides that in the case of sale, wells, trees, water-ways, fields, ripe crops, eatable fruits, ponds, toll houses, etc , should be mentioned [2] We wonder whether this refers to the purchase of a whole village In the twelfth century we have clear legal sanction for this in the work of Laksmīdhara, who explains the disposal or sale of *sthāvara* as that of a village, fields, etc [3] Devannabhatta, another authority of the same century, quotes a verse to the effect that when the village is sold along with its boundaries, water and paths, the priesthood and village deity are not to be destroyed [4]

By the thirteenth century when the *Vyavahāranirnaya* of Varadarāja was compiled, the sale of land was recognised to be a well-established practice, for this text declares land, house and the like to be *panya*, saleable commodities—a term which is hardly applied to land in earlier times [5] Provisions do not rule out the sale of land for secular purposes Instances of such sales in post-Gupta times even for religious purposes are lacking probably on account of the lesser use of coins, and the growing legal provisions regarding sale in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries can be linked up with the revival of currency and trade during that period The significant provision for the sale of whole villages indicates their ownership by landlords and reminds us of the big landholders of feudal Europe

A field is not represented as a form of pledge in Gautama, Manu, Yājñavalkya and Nārada [6] The first to do so is Brhaspati, who defines the use of a mortgaged house or the produce of a field as *bhogalābha* (interest by enjoyment) [7] Several provisions regarding the enjoyment of fields are found not only in Brhaspati but also in Kātyāyana Kātyāyana ordains that the boundaries of the house or land to be pledged and the villages or the countries in which they are situated must be defined [8] This instruction was

[1] Ibid , 761
[2] Ibid , 896
[3] *Vyavahārakalpataru* quoted, ibid , 886
[4] *Smrticandrikā*, 23, quoted in *DK*, I, 947
[5] *HDS*, III, 495, fn 878
[6] I, 125
[7] XI, 7–8
[8] Verse 522

followed in the case of villages made over as religious gifts and probably also in secular transactions Brhaspati states that when a field or other immovable property has been enjoyed and the principal and interest has been actually collected from it by the creditor, the debtor receives back his pledge [1] This shows that in the case of debt land was given towards the payment of both the principal and the interest Kātyāyana adds that the debtor can get back his field, etc , transferred for enjoyment as interest from the creditor on paying back the amount he had taken

The practice of mortgaging land on interest is attested by several post-Gupta sources Thus Asahāya (700–50), commenting on two kinds of pledge mentioned by Nārada (I, 125), gives a house and a field as instances of a pledge for use [3] Similarly commenting on *Manu*, VIII, 143, Medhātithi states that a cow is given as *ādhi* to the creditor for using its milk, and a piece of land or garden is given as *ādhi* for enjoying its produce, hence the creditor is not entitled to any *vrddhi* or *kusida* Vyāsa, who probably belonged to the same period as Medhātithi, explains *ādhi* in the same way When somebody accepts money (*dravya*) having settled interest on it and asks the creditor to enjoy his field in return for interest and to apply the excess profit towards the payment of principal, it is called *ādhi* or *sa-pratyāya-bhogy-ādhih*, it is released when twice the amount is paid [4] Even where land is not pledged it can be sold to clear off his debts According to Bharadvāja, if the debtor is unable to pay off his debts his property is to be sold for payment, and this includes his land, fields, garden and house [5]

This again points to the practice of pledging land for payment of debts, which must have added to the landed property of the creditors It is even stated that pledges of land can be enjoyed for one hundred years Provisions for pledge could be effective only with the growing use of money in the eleventh-twelfth centuries, and an epigraphic instance of this belongs to the beginning of the thirteenth century in Central India

Rules regarding loss of ownership on account of adverse possession are another indication of private rights Gautama[6] and

[1] XI, 23
[2] Verse 516
[3] *SBE* XXXIII, 73
[4] *DK*, I, 658
[5] Ibid 731
[6] *HDS* III, 320 fn 456

Manu[1] lay down that if a stranger has been in possession of property for ten years, the owner loses legal title to it Yājñavalkya raises this period to twenty years,[2] but none of these lawgivers mentions land in this context We notice a significant change in Visnu,[3] Nārada,[4] Brhaspati[5] and Kātyāyana,[6] who raise the period to three generations or roundly to sixty years and specifically apply this rule to the possession of land Later, in the eleventh century, the *Mitāksarā* raises it to a hundred years,[7] and the *Smrticandrikā*, a work of the thirteenth century, to a hundred and five years [8] Apparently from the Gupta period onwards these provisions give more and more security to holders of landed property till the concept of individual ownership of land becomes strongly entrenched by the end of the early mediaeval period The rules reflect the situation in which, though the land of an individual or even of the king might be occupied without legal title by his tenants or by some powerful neighbour for a hundred years, the original owner of the land would not be deprived of his rights

Such provisions may have borne heavily upon temporary peasants, cultivating plots of land To prescribe a longer period indicates an attempt to make tenant proprietorship very difficult in times of political chaos Taking advantage of this rule tenants of long standing could be dispossessed of their fields by the secular and religious grantees, if there was even a short break in their tenancy or occupancy It is easy to prove possession for a shorter period on the basis of memory, but nobody can vouchsafe from his memory that a particular piece of land has been in the possession of a person even for sixty years, not to speak of a hundred years In this sense the provisions regarding adverse possession helped the existing landlords but hindered the growth of the proprietory rights of tenants

[1]VIII 147–8 *Nār* , IV, 79–80 also refers to the ten-year rule and so also *Sankha*, *HDS*, III, 320

[2]II, 24

[3]V, 187

[4]I, 91

[5]IX, 27–30, *Br* here refers to the possession of immovable property and not specifically of land

[6]Verse 327

[7]On *Yāj* , II, 27

[8]Text in *HDS*, III, 321, fn 459

Individual rights in land are further proved by laws regarding the lease of land to tenants Early law-books seek to govern the relations with hired agricultural labourers, who could be even beaten, and with sharecroppers who were bound to change frequently But except a passage of Āpastamba,[1] which is capable of different interpretations, there is hardly any early provision governing the relations between the landowner and the leaseholder From the Gupta period onwards, however, the law-books regulate the relation between the owners of land (*svāmin*) on the one hand and the *ksetrika* or *karsaka* on the other Most Gupta and post-Gupta lawgivers stress the obligation of the tenants to cultivate the fields leased to them and to pay the fixed share to the owner even when they neglected cultivation [2] Several texts also enjoin that negligent tenants should pay a fine to the king [3] In case of neglect the *Mitākṣarā* provides that the field should be taken away and given to another cultivator [4] Thus the owner had the right to change his tenant The owner's share known as *krsta-phala* or *sada* differs according to the nature of the land If it has been out of cultivation for a long time his share is one-tenth of the produce, if cultivated it is one-eighth, and if well-cultivated it is one-sixth [5] The law obviously concerned such tenants as invested their own capital, implements, seeds, labour, etc , in the fields, and not sharecroppers who were supplied with part of the agricultural expenses in return for which the owner was entitled to a larger share of the produce If, however, the barren land is to be brought under cultivation for the first time, the owner is supposed to bear all its expenses If he does not do so, for eight years the tenant is asked to give him only one-eighth of the produce, and after the end of that period he is instructed to return the land to the owner

All these provisions give a fair indication of growing individual rights in land But those regarding mortgage, adverse occupation and sale seem to favour big landlords rather than ordinary peasant proprietors In any case the steady growth of the idea of private landownership in early mediaeval times may be taken as

[1] *DK*, I, 842
[2] Ibid , 943, 954, 961
[3] Ibid , 954, 961
[4] Ibid , 943
[5] Ibid , 954

an important factor in feudal polity and economy, which was based on an unequal distribution of land among various strata of society

A survey of the evidence regarding land rights from the early centuries of the Christian era to the twelfth century shows that the legal texts contain only faint traces of communal rights On the contrary they increasingly sanction royal as well as individual rights in land, which appear to be contradictory Attempts made by mediaeval commentators and modern writers to reconcile the two forms of ownership do not seem to have been successful, but the context of the distribution of land in early mediaeval times may help us to resolve the contradiction The theory of royal ownership served to justify large-scale royal land grants to priests and temples, vassals and officials, in return for their services, just as the theory of individual ownership could enable the grantees to lease land to tenants and subtenants Otherwise how can we explain four stages in the occupation and possession of a single plot of land? The epigraphic evidence shows that the sale of land was limited to religious gifts, and the paucity of coins in early mediaeval times rules out the possibility of sale of land on any considerable scale, at least up to A D 1000 Further, the theory of royal ownership fortified the mediaeval princes in levying all varieties of taxes from the peasants Both theories undermined communal rights in land and paved the way for the transformation of large stretches of pasture grounds or other forms of communal land into private property at the hands of grantees and big landowners, thus reducing ordinary peasants to the position of serfs or helpless dependants on the new landholders Both theories therefore were eminently suited to the feudal set-up of the mediaeval age

The theory of the royal ownership of land is hardly different from that of the private ownership of land, and should not be confused with state ownership, which may create the impression that land was held by the king in the interests of the community In fact the king is represented as the greatest landowner, and all the others appear as lesser landowners under him Naturally we have here a system of graded rights in land, which includes the *rājā*, the *svāmin* and the *karsaka* The obligations of all these in respect of land are set forth in varying degrees Our finding fits in with the conclusion of J D M Derrett According to him 'Indian

jurists took it for granted that the incidents of particular manifestations of ownership might differ, while the *svatva* (rights) of the king, the *svatva* of the landowner, the *svatva* of the tenant-farmer, and in an extreme case, even the *svatva* of the mortgagee in possession (as against a trespasser) were all comprehensible under the single term of property' [1] That several parties held their respective interests in the one and the same piece of land is exemplified by the Ashrafpur copper-plate grants of about the seventh-eighth century from Bangladesh We learn that a plot which was enjoyed by Śarvāntara and cultivated by Sikhara and others was donated by the king to the Buddhist monk Sanghamitra [2] Therefore at least three parties, the king, Śarvāntara who was in the enjoyment of that field, and Śikhara and other peasants who were cultivating it, enjoyed rights in the same piece of land before it was given to the Buddhist teacher

The whole system reminds us of the mediaeval European law of landed property which conceived the soil as being subject to a great number of real rights differing among themselves and superimposed [3] 'The tenant who—from father to son, as a rule—ploughs the land and gathers in the crop, his immediate lord to whom he pays dues and who, in certain circumstances, can resume possession of the land, the lord of the lord, and so on, right up the feudal scale—how many persons there are who can say, each with as much justification as the other, "That is my field" '[4] In early mediaeval India the parties having rights over the ground may not have been as many as in the West, but all the same their interests were recognised by law and in this regard the condition was similar to that in feudal Europe

But land rights in Muslim India were certainly different from what we find in our period First, the idea of the crown land (*khālisa*), as distinguished from the land possessed by private individuals was hardly popular in pre-Muslim times Truly, the villages and fields allotted by the Paramāra and Cāhamāna princes out of their personal estates (*svabhoga*) may be treated as some kind of crownland in their principalities and as different from land under the general control of the state or land under the

[1] *Bulletin of the School of the Oriental and African Studies*, XVIII, 489
[2] *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, I, 6, p 90, plate A, ll 8–9
[3] Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, p 116
[4] Ibid

occupation of free peasants But the grants of their contemporary princes as well as those of the Pālas, Pratihāras and Rāstrakūtas do not give evidence of any separate crownland, on the other hand they show that the kings were free to grant land in any part of their kingdom

Second, the jāgirs or *madad-i-maāsh* granted by the Mughal emperors did not carry such strong rights in land as did the religious and some secular grants made by early Hindu kings Mughal assignees and grantees were given only usufructuary rights and not rights of ownership of land conferred on their counterparts in the days of the Hindu rule, because the central authority was far more effective and stronger in the Mughal period than in pre-Muslim days

Finally, on account of the development of money economy and rural trade, peasant or individual rights in land tended to be stronger under Muslim rule Although from the Gupta period the law-books allowed the right of sale, puchase and mortgage, these could take effect only with the revival of the use of coins from the eleventh-twelfth centuries Conditions for the exercise of individual rights became more congenial in the following five centuries, when the peasants paid their rents or revenues mainly in cash and not in kind and services as they did earlier

On the whole, the peculiarities of the system of land rights in early mediaeval times indicate a strong decentralised feudalism, which was eventually weakened under the impact of market economy and central control under the Mughals But internal contradictions involved in the mechanism of land grants created conditions for a perpetual tug of war between different parties who claimed rights on the same piece of land On the one hand on the strength of royal charters the beneficiaries claimed various kinds of taxes, proper and improper, fixed and not fixed, on the other the peasants who were in actual possession of the ground, in many cases for generations, were bound to resent any enhancement of the customary claims, not to speak of eviction and dispossession by the beneficiary landlords Since members of the beneficiary class (brāhmanas) were the main authors of our sources, we get only stray references to the oppressions of *bhogapatis* or fief holders But it is reasonable to presume that constant conflicts raged round not only the produce of the land but also the land itself, as shown by the Kaivartta peasant revolt in Bengal

CHAPTER V

THE HEYDAY OF POLITICAL FEUDALISM
(*c* A D 1000–1200)

Neither on the fall of the Maurya empire nor on that of the Gupta empire did Northern India face such complete political disintegration as it did on the disappearance of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire in the second half of the tenth century The fragmentation of political power was never so complete and thorough as on the eve of the Turkish conquest At the time of the Kaivartta rebellion in about 1075 the whole of Bengal and Bihar was split up into about ten principalities, which owed only a nominal allegiance to the Pāla overlord The Pālas were succeeded by the Senas, whose paramountcy was challenged by the Karnātas of Mithilā (and perhaps by the dynasty of Isvaraghosa in south-east Bengal) Probably the feudal dynasts of the time of the Kaivartta rebellion continued to worry the Senas In Bihar two new princes, the Senas of Pīthi and the Guptas of Jayanagar in South Monghyr, came to the forefront during this period, when also ruled at Japla the dynasty of the Khayarvālas, who were the feudatories of the Gāhaḍavālas

The Gāhaḍavālas, of course, ruled over a major part of the modern Uttar Pradesh, but had to share power with the Kalacuris in Gorakhpur The eastern part of Central India was divided between two main dynasties, the Kalacuris of the Dāhala region with their capital at Tripurī and the Candellas of Jejākabhukti The Kalacuris broke up into three branches, of Tripurī in the west, of Ratanpura in the east and of Gorakhpur in the north

The division of Rājasthān, Gujarāt and Mālwa into several units seems to have been even more thorough The Cāhamānas were divided into five branches, ruling from Broach, Jāvālipura (founded in the mid-twelfth century), Śākambhari, Naddula and Ranthambor Of these the Cāhamāna families of Broach and Ranthambor leapt into prominence in the beginning of the thirteenth century, but may have existed in the twelfth century as

well The Guhilas, practically independent in the second half of the twelfth century when they ousted the founder of the Jāvālipura branch of the Cāhamānas, declared their independence some time between 1207 and 1227, as a result of which Mewar and Āghāta were temporarily lost to the Caulukyas [1] They held the area round Mewar, which became independent in the first decade of the thirteenth century The Tomaras held Ajmer and Delhi, and the Kacchapaghāta dynasts also ruled over some portions of Rājasthān

Similarly, the Paramāras, who ruled over Mālwa and the adjoining areas, proliferated into the different branches of Mālwa, Abu, Bhinmal and Kiradu, all ruling in the twelfth century Abu became independent in the time of Bhīma Caulukya, who restored his authority over the Abu Paramāras by 1062 After this Abu remained a part of the Caulukya kingdom till the end of the thirteenth century, though the Paramāras were allowed to rule there as vassals [2] But Bhinmal became independent in the time of Bhīma [3] Kiradu came into prominence under the Paramāra Someśvara who made his kingdom secure through the favour of Kumārapāla In about 1156 he helped his sovereign by defeating a chief called Jajaka from whom he captured 1700 horses [4] The Caulukya rule, however, brought political unity to Gujarāt, which had been divided into north and south But towards the end of the twelfth century their feudatories, the Vaghelas, set up their own independent rule in Gujarāt

We do not have adequate information about the Panjab, which lacks in land grants The dynasty of the Shāhi princes, who ruled over the Panjab and Ohind, was extinguished in 1021 by Mahmud of Ghazni The Himalayan state of Chamba was under its own independent rulers

Thus on the break-up of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire the political picture of north-western India resembled that of Western Europe on the collapse of the Carolingian empire, only in India we have more numerous independent dynasts whose sovereign powers are proved by the issue of coins and by the execution of land grants without any reference to their overlord

[1] A K Majumdar, *Caulukyas of Gujarat*, p 156
[2] Ibid, pp 49–50
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid, p 111

The numerous principalities continued to fight amongst themselves, and the period from A D 1000 to 1300 has been rightly characterised as 'the struggle for empire' Apart from fighting the Kaivarttas, the Pālas measured swords with the Kalacuris and Gāhadavālas for the possession of the western parts of Bihar The Kalacuris fought the kings of Orissa, the Candellas and the Gāhadavālas The Gāhadavālas fought the Candellas, and the Cāhamānas, whose king Prthvīrāja sacked Mahoba, an important seat of Candella power Similarly the Paramāras inflicted a severe defeat on Paramardin, the Candella king In fact the twelfth century witnessed a tripartite struggle between the Candellas, the Gāhadavālas, and the Cāhamānas for supremacy over Northern India Perpetual fighting went on among the Paramāras, Caulukyas and Cāhamānas Now and then the Paramāras also waged wars against the Hūnas, who held some pockets in Mālwa and Rājasthān To add to this the Colas, and particularly the Cālukyas, led occasional raids into Northern India The Senas, who established their kingdoms in Bengal, and the Karnātas, who established their kingdom in Tirhut, came in the train of the Cālukyas, and once established in power fought between themselves And then the Brāhmana Shāhis of the Panjab and the Caulukyas of Gujarāt waged a bitter war against Mahmud of Ghazni, and the Caulukyas, Cāhamānas and Gāhadavālas fought Muhammad of Ghur

The administrative and economic consequences of these frequent wars amongst principalities, mostly similar in size to the modern administrative divisions of a state, can be better visualised if we bear in mind that each principality worth the name would maintain its army, its police system, its court, its revenue machinery, its judiciary, its feudatories, and its priests and temples It is obvious that all this bore heavily on the peasantry, who would naturally have no interest in the preservation of such states

How did these principalities arise? Some of them were obviously the results of the partition of patrimony among the princes of the ruling family But others resulted from the widespread practice of granting big and small territories to vassals and officials who entrenched themselves territorially and ended up as independent potentates The Gupta and post-Gupta epigraphs provide very little evidence on this point We have, however, some indications of this in the following period 750–1000 But we get

quite a bit of evidence for the period 1000–1200 Epigraphic evidence of such grants can be traced back to the ninth century, and they become considerable in number only from the beginning of the eleventh century The earlier grants to vassals and officials were either oral or written on perishable material, such as the bark of the birch tree or cloth The former material was used in Gujarāt during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries for making grants to vassals of various kinds,[1] and it may have been used in earlier times The law-books of the Gupta period provide for documents of gifts of land to be written either on copper-plates or on pieces of cloth [2] Since grants to officials and feudatories were not always intended to secure spiritual merit or to last for ever, they were recorded on pieces of cloth By the end of the tenth century officials and feudatories grew so powerful that, in order to secure grants on a permanent basis, they probably preferred to have them on some durable material

Service grants of land are found mostly in Orissa and in about half a dozen feudatory kingdoms, which arose on the ruins of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire But it is significant that we have very few such grants even in the last days of the Pāla rule in Bengal and Bihar Indirect evidence for the grant of land to a high dignitary is found under Vigrahapāla III (1055–70) A brāhmana officer Ghantūśa, described as a servant (*vidheya*) of the king, granted land, with the permission of Vigrahapāla, out of his own possession (*hala*),[3] which may have been granted to him by the Pāla ruler as a service tenure The only other piece of epigraphic evidence which can be interpreted in this light is the copper-plate grant of Vaidyadeva from Kāmarūpa, whose family had provided hereditary ministers to three generations of Pāla kings, Vigrahapāla, Rāmapāla, and Kumārapāla, thus covering the period from 1055 to 1125 Vaidyadeva, who served under Kumārapāla, had become practically independent towards the last days of the Pāla empire, and granted two villages in Prāgjyotisabhukti, without the formal endorsement of his suzerain [4] These two villages were formerly enjoyed by (*bhuktaka*) Gangādhara Bhatta,[5] who

[1] *LP*, p 7
[2] *Yāj*, I, 318–20 and *Bṛhaspati* quoted in *Vyavahāramayūkha*, pp 25–7
[3] *EI*, XXIX, 8, ll, 49–51
[4] *EI*, II, 28, plate II, b, l 15
[5] Ibid

evidently had received them earlier either from the Pāla king or from his Kāmarūpa minister Apparently the ministerial family had increased its landed property as a result of successive grants from the Pāla kings, and had ultimately slipped out of their control In spite of all this, the fact remains that except some land grants to Kaivarttas we have no direct evidence of land assignments to officials and feudatories under the Pālas This may be attributed to the existence of fewer categories of vassals and to the stability of the central power, evident from the continuity of the same dynasty for well over four centuries Further, of all mediaeval rulers the Pālas maintained the largest complement of officers, which did not easily allow a few officers to assume so much power as to demand copper-plate charters for land grants

The position seems to have been different under the Varmans, the feudatories of the Pālas in South-East Bengal Bhavadeva, whose grandfather had served as minister under a king of Vanga[1] and who himself was a minister of Harivarmadeva[2] (*c* 1200), claims to have increased his land and learning by military and intellectual feats respectively [3] Obviously this could not have been possible unless his master granted him land as a reward for his military achievements We also learn that his ancestor Bhavadeva had been granted a village by the king of Gauda [4] We have no service grants belonging to the Sena dynasty We do not have any proof of direct vassals of the Sena rulers, but a religious grant of Viśvarūpasena, ascribable to the beginning of the thirteenth century A D , may be interpreted in this light We learn that in Pundravardhanabhukti a brāhmana called Halāyudha purchased from two persons some land,[5] which, as defined in the title-deed, was then made over to him by Kumāra Sūryasena on his birthday [6] This furnishes an example of land sale for secular purposes Whether the gift meant the refund of the price of land to the donee cannot be definitely said But perhaps this sale transaction and subsequent donation were carried out within the territorial jurisdiction of the prince By another provision two

[1] Ibid , III, 4, verse 9
[2] Ibid verse 16
[3] Ibid , verse 12
[4] Ibid verses 6–7
[5] *IB*, III, 16, 11, 53–4
[6] Ibid

other plots of land purchased by Halāyudha and enjoyed by Kumāra Purusottamasena were later given by that prince in the fourteenth regnal year of Viśvarūpasena [1] Apparently the two Sena princes had been assigned some land, in which their rights were limited by two factors First, their tenants could freely carry on land transactions without the consent of the assignee Secondly, the religious grants made by the assignees had to be declared in a general charter issued by the king, who was the head of the royal family Similar rights were also enjoyed by the minister of peace and war Nānīsimha, in the land probably assigned to him, for he made over to the same Halāyudha two plots of land, one arable and the other homestead, which had been purchased by the donee from two persons [2] Thus the present grant suggests that the Sena kings granted land to members of the royal family and officials In mediaeval Assamese grants various kinds of feudatories swamp the officials, but we do not have any epigraphic evidence of land grants made to either

Orissa, which in mediaeval times was split up into numerous petty states, favoured by its physical features, has more service grants than Assam, Bengal and Bihar taken together In this region ministers, astrologers, *rānakas* (higher vassals) and *sāmantas* (military vassals) were granted land on auspicious occasions, apparently for services rendered to their overlords The Somavamśī ruler Mahābhavagupta II (1000–15) granted a village to *rānaka* Rāccho, the grandson of a bhatta brāhmana, who had emigrated from Śrāvastī *mandala* [3] That the *rānaka* occupied a high place in the feudal hierarchy of this ruler is evident from his inclusion in the list *rājñī-rānaka-rājaputra-rājavallabh-ādīn*, addressed in this charter [4] This grant carried with it all the usual rights which are found in the grants of this period made to brāhmanas Although it was made on spiritual grounds, on the occasion of a solar eclipse, the title *rānaka* attached to the name of the beneficiary suggests that the donation may have something to do with his administrative and military services as a vassal Incidentally the grant shows that this title, originally applied only to the members

[1] Ibid , 11, 56–8
[2] Ibid , 11, 54–6
[3] *EI*, III, 47, plate F, ll, 28–42
[4] Ibid , ll, 33–4

of the ruling family, now came to be extended to brāhmana vassals

A copper-plate of the Bhañja ruler Yaśabhañjadeva of Khiñjali (in the former Baud state) refers to his allotment of a village with all the usual rights to an astrologer (*jyotisī*) Jagadhara Śarmā,[1] who was also granted another village by Jayabhañja, the younger brother of Yasabhañja, both charters dating in the second half of the twelfth century [2] The astrologers appear high in the list of vassals and officials addressed by the king in the land grants of the Gāhadavālas and Senas Very probably they also occupied an important official position in the Bhañja kingdom of Khiñjali, where religious grants to them really represent assignments for their services in making calendars and determining auspicious occasions for important government undertakings Under the Bhañjas of Khijinga we find two rulers in succession allotting villages to a military vassal called *mahāsāmanta* Vatta First, Ranabhañja granted him four villages with their four boundaries, not to be entered by *cātas* and *bhātas*, with rights to mines, as a reward for his conduct as a royal servant (*vidheyī drstvā*) [3] Here he is described as *mahāsāmanta mundisutah* Vatta, which may give the impression that he was the son of the *mahāsāmanta* Mundi But the second grant, made to him by Ranabhañja's successor Rājabhañja, discloses that he was *mahāsāmanta* Vatta, son of *sāmanta* Mundi [4] Here also he was enfeoffed for his satisfactory service, and curiously enough in this case the fief was a Brāhmanavasati, a village numerically dominated by brāhmanas [5] Of course this grant was made free of taxes and all administrative encumbrances imposed by the king [6] Privileges allowed in the first grant imply that it was tax-free, but this is not explicitly stated therein We have no further epigraphic evidence of land grants to *sāmantas* and *mahāsāmantas*, but the *sāmantas*, who form an important landowning element in Orissa, very probably owed their origin to such grants

Under the Greater Gangas, who ruled over both Oriya and

[1] *EI*, XVIII, 29, ll 19–29
[2] *EI*, XIX 43 and fn 1
[3] *JASB* XL, 3, p 166
[4] Ibid , p 168
[5] Ibid
[6] *akaratvena ca sarvvavadha vivarjjitena* Ibid , p 168

Telegu speaking areas, we find quite a few epigraphic grants made to officers Under the Ganga king Vajrahasta (1038–70) a high officer Dāraparāja, who was the regent of five districts (*pañca-visaya*),[1] granted a tax-free village to the *rājaputrā* bridegroom on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter [2] Obviously the donor could not make such a grant unless he himself had received a large slice of territory from his Ganga overlord He was not entitled to this on the ground of kinship, for he was the son of Cola-Kāmadirāja[3] and thus not related to the ruling house Direct proof of a grant to a high officer is found in the reign of Anantavarman Codaganga (1076–1138), who assigned to his trusty agent (*āptakriyāya*) Codaganga a village with a hamlet in Kalinga, for the spiritual merit and fame of him and his parents [4] But this usual phrase was probably a euphemism for services rendered to the state

The typical service grants of the Ganga rulers seem to have been made to military functionaries known as *nāyakas* Thus under Vajrahasta III (1049) a village in Andhra Pradesh was granted to a person called Ganapati Nāyaka,[5] who, because of the absence of his *gotra* and *pravara* and also on the analogy of the following charter, seems to have been a vaiśya of some importance The second charter was issued in the year 526 of the Ganga era under Madhukāmārnava, son of Anantavarman [6] According to it three villages were together formed into a *vaisya-agrahāra* and granted to a certain Erapa Nāyaka, the son of Mañci Nāyaka of the vaiśya caste [7]

Unfortunately further details about these charters cannot be obtained from their brief notices in *Madras Epigraphic Reports*, but the term *agrahāra*, for want of a better word, here evidently stood for an assigned village It could not have possibly meant a grant to a *nāyaka* (military leader) for running an educational foundation, a sense in which the term was used ordinarily in earlier grants In all likelihood this considerable grant was made to the *nāyaka* for maintaining a fixed number of soldiers for the service of the state

[1] *EI*, XXIX, 26, ll, 26–33
[2] *EI* III 31, ll, 9–15
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid, p 174, ll, 30–4
[5] *Madras Report on Epigraphy*, 1918–19 Appendix A, 3
[6] Ibid, 5
[7] Ibid

Some evidence of a grant to a *nāyaka* is also found in an inscription of Anantavarman Codaganga, who made a perpetual grant of a tax-free village to his dependant Mādhava [1] The term *pād-opajīvin* (subsisting on the feet) applied to the assignee does not indicate his exact official position But the title *nāyaka* attached to the name of his grandfather Vāsudeva[2] suggests that his family rendered some kind of military service to the Gangas He was either a feudal vassal or an officer, for both these classes of functionaries are covered by the term *pād-opajīvin* in the Pāla land grants

By the thirteenth century the system of Ganga administration became completely feudal, for in 1295 we find Nrsimhadeva II, the builder of the Sun Temple at Konārak, granting two villages to the *kumāra mahāpātra* Bhīmadeva Śarman,[3] who, as can be inferred from his title *mahāpātra*, was a minister under this king As a part of this grant, which was made on the occasion of a lunar eclipse, the donee also received one *śresthi* (merchant), one *tāmbūli* (betel-seller), one *tāmrakāra* (copper-smith) and one *kamsakāra* (brazier), all from different villages [4] Apparently the purpose was to make their services available to the self-sufficient estate of the *mahāpātra*, who may have granted them some land for their maintenance For by the same grant Nrsimhadeva II allots half a *vātikā* of a land to a *tāmrakāra* (copper-smith) named Nādi [5] The instances quoted above are not many, but unless we have evidence to the contrary it would be fair to conclude that the important mediaeval dynasties of Orissa, the Bhañjas, Somavamśīs and Greater Gangas, paid their vassals and officials by land grants

In the neighbouring kingdom of Bundelkhand ruled by the Candellas we find that land grants were occasionally made to civil and frequently to military officials The earliest grant can be traced back to Dhanga (954–1002), who granted a village with all the usual rights to the brāhmana Bhatta Yaśodhara [6] Although this grant was made on religious grounds, we learn from another record that the donee held the office of the chief priest and judge

[1] *IA*, XVIII, 171–2, ll, 109–13
[2] Ibid , I, 109
[3] *JASB*, LXV, pt I, pp 254–6, ll, 121
[4] Ibid , ll, 19–21,
[5] Ibid , ll 18–19
[6] *IA*, XVI, 204, ll 6–11

But under the Candellas the kāyasthas played an important part in administration An inscription of Kīrttivarman (1073–90) refers to the royal grant of the prosperous village of Dargaṇḍa to a Vāstavya kāyastha dignitary Jājūka,[1] who, as we learn from the Ajayagadh rock inscription of Bhojavarman, was appointed by Gaṇḍa, the successor of Dhanga, as a *thakkura* looking after all the departments of government [2] His descendant Maheśvara was granted the village of Pipalāhikā and vested with authority over the gates of Kālañjara by Kīrttivarman in recognition of, and as a reward for, the services that the former rendered to him when he fell in distress in Pītādri,[3] apparently in some battle The inscription of Bhojavarman, referred to above, mentions both these grants It also speaks of a third grant[4] under Trailokyavarman, who appointed Vāseka, a member of this kāyastha family, as *viśisa* of the fort of Jayapura (the present Ajayagaḍh), and endowed him with a village [5] The village was obviously made over to him for his military services, for he not only defeated a rebel called Bhojaka and conquered part of his territory, but also pacified the Candella kingdom and made it secure against foreign enemies [6] Members of this kāyastha family held important offices for nearly 280 years under the Candella kings from Gaṇḍa to Bhojavarman [7] But they generally appear as warriors, since of the three grants made to this family two were made for military services

The military aspect comes out prominently in some Candella grants, made to brāhmanas and others Thus in 1187 Paramardin granted a *pada* of land to the brāhmana *senāpati* Ajayapāla, the son of *senāpati* Kelhaṇa [8] Again he granted one *pada* each to one of his sons, *rāuta* Somarāja,[9] and to two other sons Mahārāja and Vatsarāja,[10] who had not attained the position of *rāuta* Portions of land granted to the *senāpati* and his *rāuta* son were not enough for their maintenance But in another case Paramardin granted in

[1] Ibid , XXX, 17, verse 6
[2] *ṭhakkura dharmayuktah sarvvādhikaranesu sadā niyuktah* Ibid , I, 38, II verse 6
[3] *EI*, XXX, 17, verse 8
[4] None of the copper-plates has come to light
[5] Ibid , verses 16–17
[6] Ibid , verses 6–20
[7] Ibid
[8] Ibid , verses 19–20
[9] *EI*, IV, 20, 1, 19
[10] Ibid , II, 66–7

1171 a whole village to the brāhmana *senāpati* Madanapāla Śarmā, whose father, grandfather and great grandfather had held the title of *thakkura*,[1] a feudal title commonly applied to brāhmana, kšatriya and kāyastha functionaries of mediaeval times in Northern India The village was granted to the commander-in-chief free from past, present and future dues,[2] a characteristic of all Candella grants But in the above two grants to brāhmana military functionaries the ground given is not military service but spiritual benefit Death in the battlefield is clearly stated to be the cause of a grant by Trailokyavarman in 1204, when he granted a village to the heirs of *rāuta* Sāmanta as *mrtyuka-vrtau* (i e , for the maintenance of the family of the dead), as this *rāuta*, whose father and grandfather had also held this title, was killed in a fight with the Turuskas [3] The same king made another grant to the family of the same *rāuta* in 1205 [4] The *gotra* of the grantee is mentioned[5] but not his caste, perhaps he was a ksatriya An important military dignitary was *nāyaka* Kulaśarmā—son of a *nāyaka*, grandson of a *rāuta*, and great grandson of a *rānaka*—who was granted by Trailokyavarman in 1208 a village with the usual concessions and terms mentioned in the Candella grants [6] Although the grantee was a brāhmana, we have no reference either to spiritual merit or to some pious occasion connected with this charity It was therefore a non-sectarian copper-plate charter of land given to a hereditary brāhmana military official Viravarman, the son and successor of Trailokyavarman, granted in 1254 a village to a *rāuta*—whose father, grandfather and great grandfather had held this position in succession—for an act of valour in battle [7] But the purpose recorded was the increase of the religious merit of the donor and parents,[8] although the mention of the *gotra* of the grantee[9] does not necessarily show that he was a brāhmana Lastly, we may refer to a second grant of Viravarman made in

[1] *IA*, XXV, 205 ff, ll, 16–19
[2] Ibid , l 11
[3] *EI*, XVI, 20, I ll 7–11
[4] Ibid , II, ll 7–12
[5] Ibid , I, l 10
[6] *EI*, XXXI, II, ll 12–18
[7] *EI*, XX, 14c, ll 3–14
[8] Ibid
[9] Ibid

1288 to a very important military brāhmana official called Balabhadra Mallaya, an illustrious chief of distinguished bravery, who had conquered the rājās of six places, the Turks and rulers from Kashmir [1] Of course the purpose specified in the grant was the spiritual benefit of the donor and his parents,[2] but there is no doubt that the beneficiary was a non-brāhmana and that the village was granted in recognition of his great military achievements

The number of Candella service grants is not negligible, and they make it clear that chief priests, judges, governors of forts, *senāpatis*, *nāyakas* and *rāutas* of the Candellas were granted land for their services Whether the *rāutas* were required to serve their king with a fixed number of horses or soldiers cannot be said on the basis of the existing evidence But most Candella service tenures seem to be of a military nature This indicates the preponderance of the military element, which can also be inferred from the mention of as many as twenty-one *skandhāvāras* (military and administrative camps) in the Candella territory

Under Trailokyavarman in 1212 we find the grant of a village in the form of mortgage (*vitta-bandha*) made by a Śaivite teacher Śāntaśiva, son of the royal preceptor (*rājaguru*), to a *rānaka* in consideration of perhaps a huge amount of money which is not mentioned [3] Unless the *rānaka* carried on trade, which seems unlikely, he could have no other source of income than the revenue derived presumably from the land granted to him by the Candella kings The *rānaka* was a chief of considerable importance, since he was served by a *thakkura*, who was authorised to take possession of the village on his behalf [4] This Candella mortgage land grant can be compared to a similar deed recorded on a special size brick in Jaunpur in 1227 Here we find a *rānaka* mortgaging his fields to two other *rānakas* in consideration of a loan of 2250 drammas [5] Perhaps they had received their land from the Gāhadavālas, who ruled over Jaunpur Remarkably enough, in the above mentioned two instances the *rānakas* are found engaged in moneylending and thus increasing their

[1] A Cunningham, *ASR* XXI, 75
[2] Ibid
[3] *EI*, XXV, 1, ll 10–14
[4] Ibid , ll 20–1, p 3
[5] *JASB*, XIX (1850), 454–6 *dhanika* is the term used for the creditor

landed property In such a case the mortgagee enjoyed limited rights, confined to the collection of taxes[1] or enjoyment of the produce of the fields so long as the debts were not cleared off But if the debtor failed to pay off his dues the mortgaged land would certainly pass under the control of the mortgagee These two cases, especially the one under the Candellas, show clear regranting by local rulers of the land which presumably had been previously granted to them by their overlords Such mortgage of land in later mediaeval France and Germany (i e, from the twelfth century onwards) was treated as a fief, the debtor being the lord and the creditor the vassal[2] Similar relations, however, did not exist between the debtor and creditor in mediaeval India

In U P the oldest inscriptional evidence for a land grant to an official is found in Gorakhpur about the beginning of the tenth century A religious benefaction made by the minister (*saciva*) Madoli, son of the *sāmanta* and *mantrī* Kṛtakīrtti, states that the village he granted to Durgā had been obtained by him through the favour of king Jayāditya,[3] who may have been a feudatory of the Gurjara-Pratihāras But we have no service grants by the Pratīhāras until we come to Yaśahpāla, perhaps the last ruler of the line In 1036 this king, while camping at Kara near Allahabad, presented a village in the *mandala* of Kauśāmbī as a gift to Māthura Vikata of Pabhosa[4] This was certainly a non-religious grant made to a non-brāhmana Probably the grantee was a kāyastha, whose ancestors hailed from Mathurā It seems that Māthura kāyasthas served under various dynasties Thus the minister of the Cāhamāna ruler Hammira belonged to the Kaṭāriyā kāyastha family of Mathurā, whose genealogy is given in an inscription of 1288[5] The Gāhadavālas, the successors of the Partīhāras in the greater part of U P, are not so far known for any grant to a kāyastha officer, but they made grants to their other vassals and officials on a considerable scale

In contrast to the Candellas the Gāhaḍavālas generally granted villages to civil officials, mainly brāhmanas, among whom their chief priest Jāguka or Jāgu Śarmā and his son Prahlāda Śarmā

[1] *EI*, XXV, I l 19
[2] Ganshof, *Feudalism*, p 110
[3] *grāmo rāja-prasāda-samprāptah*, *IA*, XXI, 170–1, ll, 7–12
[4] *JRAS*, 1927, p 694
[5] *EI*, XIV, 6, ll, 9–26

received the lion's share A survey of ten Gāhadavāla grants made to this *purohita*, who invariably occupied the highest position among the official dignitaries mentioned in the land grants and held office successively under two rulers, Madanapāla and Govindacandra, shows that he was granted ten villages situated in about ten different *pattalās* (fiscal units) of the Gāhadavāla kingdom [1] The *purohita* received a village almost annually between 1114 and 1127 But he then fell into disfavour for about ten years He was again restored to favour in 1139 when he received a land grant [2] The reason for these grants is stated to be spiritual,[3] but this occurs as a matter of form, in reality the grants seems to be annual payments for services rendered to the Gāhadavāla rulers Since the villages granted to him were scattered in ten different fiscal units, Jāgu Śarmā could not easily consolidate his power and position But there is no doubt that his general influence spread over a considerable part of the Gāhadavāla kingdom The power and prestige of the family was further extended by eight grants in favour of Jāgu Śarmā's son, Prahlāda or Praharāja Śarmā, who was given a feudatory or military rank of *rāuta* and who stepped into the shoes of his father as a *mahāpurohita* [4] Thus this brāhmana family enjoyed landed property in eighteen *pattalās*, their total number in the whole kingdom being sixty [5] The grants carried the same rights and privileges as those made to brāhmanas, and, between father and son, Jāgu Śarmā and Prahlāda Śarmā were entitled to almost all the Gāhadavāla taxes and imposts specified and unspecified [6]

The Gāhaḍavālas also granted villages to some other brāhmana dignitaries, who served as hereditary *rāutas* under them Thus in 1133 Govindacandra conferred a village on the brāhmana *rāuta* Jaṭeśa Śarmā, whose father was a *rāuta* and grandfather a *thakkura* [7] Again in 1168 Jayaccandra, as *yuvarāja*, granted a village to two hereditary brāhmana *rāutas*, whose father was a

[1] Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gāhaḍavāla Dynasty*, Appendix B, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23, 26 and 37

[2] *EI*, II, 29, 11, ll, 19–20

[3] Ibid , 11, A, ll. 20–1, B, ll 19–20, C, l 19, etc

[4] Niyogi, op cit , Appendix B, 50, 52–6, 58

[5] Ibid , 138

[6] *samasta-niyat-āniyat-ādāyan* *EI*, IV, II 0 11

[7] Ibid , J ll 19–21

rāuta and grandfather a *thakkura* The village was granted on spiritual grounds with all rights in perpetuity [1] In 1186 on similar grounds Jayaccandra granted a village to the *rāuta* Ananga, whose father and grandfather had been *rāutas* We are not sure whether he was a brāhmana although his *gotra* and *pravaras* are mentioned [2] We have only one clear instance of land grants to a ksatriya *rāuta* In 1177, as king, Jayaccandra bestowed a village on a kṣatriya *rāuta* Rājyadharavarman, who was the son of the *mahāmahattaka thakkura* śrī Vidyādhara and grandson of the *mahāmahattaka thakkura* śrī Jagaddhara [3] Curiously enough both the *gotra* and *pravaras* of this donee are mentioned,[4] and had he not been described as a ksatriya[5] he could easily have been mistaken for a brāhmana, for the grant is accompanied by religious formalities and intended to last as long as the sun and the moon [6] Rājyadharavarman was evidently a very powerful functionary, as he was assigned five other grants besides this [7] Leaving aside the names of villages and *pāṭakas* (hamlets, i e, *maujas* or *paṭṭīs*) assigned to this officer, all the six grants (1177–80) in his favour are similarly worded They nowhere impose on him any obligation to serve the donor, on the contrary the object of all these grants is to secure spiritual merit to the donor and his parents But they could not possibly have been made out of purely altruistic and charitable motives, and certainly not out of religious considerations, for the donee was a kṣatriya Whether he forced the king to make these grants is not clear But since three grants were made to him in 1177 and another three in 1180, this suggests that he had become exceptionally powerful during these two years But in spite of half a dozen fiefs Rājyadharavarman was not as influential as Jāgu Śarmā and his son, who had eighteen grants to their credit

Under the Gāhadavālas *rānakas* also seem to have received

[1] *IA*, XV, 7–8, ll 16–22 His grandfather's brother also was a *thakkura* It appears that the rank of a *rāuta* was higher that of a *thakkura*

[2] *IA*, XV, 11-12, ll, 20–29

[3] *IA*, XVIII, pp 134 ff, ll, 20–4, 27–35

[4] Ibid, ll, 27–8

[5] Ibid, l, 28

[6] Ibid, ll 26–7

[7] *IA*, XVIII, 134 ff, plates G H, I, J and K

some land grants We hear of a land gift made by the *rānaka* Lavarāpravāha in 1109 with the permission of the *yuvarāja* Govindacandra, apparently acting on behalf of his father Madanapāla [1] Obviously the *rānaka* made this grant out of the village granted to him Towards the end of the Gāhaḍavāla rule some *rānakas* set up independent principalities Thus in 1197 we find a *rāuta* mentioning not only the lord of Kānyakubja but also the *rājya* (kingdom) of his immediate *rānaka* lord [2] We also find a Gāhadavāla feudatory Singara Vatsarāja making a grant in Rāpadi *visaya* in 1134 on the same terms as his Gāhadavāla overlord,[3] although he may have been reinstated in his dominions rather than endowed with any land grants by his suzerain

Since military service and acts of bravery do not appear in the Gāhaḍavāla copper-plates as reasons for grants of villages to *rāutas*, as we find in the Candella grants, we may think that grants were made for general services of all varieties *Rānakas* and *rāutas*, however, are not mentioned in the list of officials so often repeated in the Gāhadavāla grants This would suggest that they were vassals, distinct from regular officials under the direct control of the state The number of *rāutas* was far greater under the Gāhadavālas than under the Candellas

There is some evidence to show that, apart from the *purohita*, even some regular officials were granted villages This can be inferred from the use of the term *vikara-grāmāh* (tax-free villages) in the Gāhadavāla copper-plates of 1092–93, according to which a whole *pattalā* (fiscal unit) was granted by Candradeva to 500 brāhmanas [4] The district was granted with the exception of villages belonging to temples and brāhmanas and of tax-free villages [5] The charter names twenty-five villages as belonging to temples, two villages as belonging to brāhmanas and six villages as tax-free (*vikara-grāmāh*) [6] There does not seem to be any sense in taking these villages as belonging to handless people, as has been

[1] *IA*, XVIII, pp 18–19, ll, 10–28
[2] *JASB*, N S, VII, 763, ll 1–9
[3] *EI*, IV, 12
[4] *EI*, XIV, 15, ll, 23–30
[5] Ibid
[6] Ibid , ll, 27–30

done by D R Sahni [1] The term *vikara* can only mean tax-free,[2] and it appears that these villages were granted to officials Such tax-free villages may well have existed in the other *pattalās* of the kingdom also, but they are not noticed because in no other case is a whole *pattalā* granted

A fiscal unit of eighty-four villages is mentioned in a Gāhadvāla inscription, but we have several units of this kind under the Cāhamānas and Paramāras Such units probably imply the virtual partition of the paternal dominion among the members of the ruling clan In fact the Gāhadavāla records do not provide us any evidence of any grant to kinsmen and relations, although *rājās*, *rājñīs* (queens) and *yuvarājas* (crown princes) occupy the highest place in the official list of the dignitaries and officers who are notified of the land grants [3] But several Cāhamāna inscriptions testify to the apportionment of land among the kinsmen of the ruling chief The earliest record of this type is a stone inscription of 973, found in the former state of Jaipur and belonging to the Śākambhari, the main line of the Cāhamānas [4] According to it the king Simharāja, his two brothers Vatsarāja and Vigraharāja, his two sons Candarāja and Govindarāja, and perhaps his distant kinsman Jayanarāja, each gave to a Śiva temple villages and hamlets out of their respective personal possessions (*svabhoga*) [5] Each one had been evidently allowed a personal estate, varying according to his status, for his personal support and services rendered to the king The present inscription shows that not only the king but even the junior members of the ruling clan could dispose of their personal land freely

We have slightly different evidence of this type in the twelfth century An inscription of 1143 informs us that a Cāhamāna queen Śri-Tihunaka enjoyed a village as *girās* (for food and clothing) [6] Here the queen did not belong to the kin of the family in which she was married, but she was given a personal estate

[1] Ibid , 196

[2] Ibid , 196, fn 1 *Vikara* also appears as a form of fight If we adopt this meaning villages may have been made tax-free in return for the soldiers they supplied to the king In the *Lekhapaddhati* the term *vikarapada* is used in the sense of miscellaneous expenses (pp 99, 101)

[3] *EI*, IV, II, A, ll 15–16

[4] *EI*, II, 8

[5] Ibid , verses 48–9

[6] *EI*, XI, 4, V, 1 2

commensurate to her status A very clear grant to a royal scion is found in the Nadol plates of 1161, according to which twelve villages with absolute rights were assigned jointly by the *rājakula* Alhanadeva and the *kumāra* Kelhanadeva to the *rājaputra* Kīrttipāla [1] This fief was assigned to Kīrttipāla in perpetuity, for when he makes over a yearly sum of two drammas from each of the twelve villages to a Jain temple he asks his descendants to observe the terms of his grant [2] We find a unit of twelve villages in a Cāhamāna inscription of the tenth century,[3] but are not sure whether this was granted as a personal estate The practice of granting land to the members of the ruling clan continued under the successors of Kīrttipāla According to a grant of 1176 his two sons the *rājaputra* Lakhanapāl and the *rājaputra* Abhayapāla were the proprietors (*bhoktr*) of Sinānava [4] They also enjoyed a village conjointly with the queen, for all the three together contributed their share in barley collected from the *araghata* (machine-well) of that village [5] This was done during the reign of the *mahārājādhirāja* Kelhana,[6] who had obviously succeeded to the throne of Alhana, the father of the *rājaputra* Kīrttipāla

The grants made to queens and *rājaputras* were entirely secular Evidently the queen was not expected to perform any administrative functions unless she acted as regent or in a similar capacity But this cannot be said of the *rājaputras* In the early stage the rank of a *rājaputra* carried with it some kind of land grant And most probably this grant was made to a vassal who was supposed to render certain services to the state Thus under the *mahārāja* Samarasimha, son of the *mahārāja* Kirttipāla, his maternal uncle the *rājaputra* Jojala acted as *rājyacintaka*, i e, a minister or a general administrator [7] A recent study of the Cāhamānas shows that government was carried on by the members of the Nadol family [8] It is certain that the vassals, mainly kinsmen, were

[1] Ibid, IX, 9, B, ll 17–29
[2] Ibid, ll 17–30
[3] Ibid, II, 8, verse 49
[4] Ibid, XI, 4, XV, ll 1–5
[5] Ibid
[6] Ibid
[7] *EI*, XI, 4, XVIII, p 53
[8] Under Kelhana outposts of his kingdom were governed by his sons and relatives Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p 202

expected to help the chief who granted fiefs to them What concrete form this help took is difficult to visualise According to later practices the kinsmen, who received *jāgīrs* from their chief, were bound to help him in times of war and pay him a fee at the time of succession to their estates [1] Except for performing these two obligations they functioned practically as little kings in their areas [2] A somewhat similar position may have obtained under the early Cāhamānas, but we have no contemporary testimony to confirm this

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to hold that all Cāhamāna administration was a family affair There are good grounds to suppose that certain functionaries who were granted land did not belong to the royal family As early as 973 Dhandhuka, the *dussādhya* of the *mahārājādhirāja* Simharāja, with the permission of his master gave to the temple of Śiva a village which he possessed in the Khaṭṭakūpa-*viṣaya* [3] He was one of the seven donors, among whom six, including the king, were members of the royal family, and hence made benefacations without consulting any authority [4] It is obvious that this police officer had been granted several other villages besides this But since he could not make even religious grants without the sanction of the donor, his was a limited assignment An inscription of 1110 from Mārwar informs us that, in the reign of king Aśvarāja, Uppalarāka, the Great Master of Stables, granted to a temple his share of barley collected from the machine-wells of four villages [5] We cannot but infer that these villages, a part of the revenues of which he could dispose of freely, had been assigned to him by the king with absolute rights It seems that towards the last days of the Cāhamāna rule larger areas were granted as fiefs to ministers Kadambavāsa, the chief adviser of Prthivīrāja III, held the title of *mandalesvara*, which indicates that he was assigned a whole *mandala* by way of salary or to support this dignity [6] These three instances show that officials not belonging to the royal kin were granted land

[1] Baden-Powell, *The Indian Village Community*, pp 196–202

[2] Ibid

[3] *EI*, II, no 8, verse 49

[4] Ibid

[5] *EI*, XI, 4, III, ll 1–3

[6] Dasharatha Sharma, op cit, p 198 It is suggested that he may have been a hereditary ruler of some territories (ibid, fn 35)

The Paramāra epigraphs rarely refer directly to land grants to the members of the ruling clan, of which we have fairly clear proof in the Cāhamāna inscriptions The only Paramāra record which can be interpreted in this light is a land charter of the time (1011) of Bhoja[1] It applies the term *bhoktrmahārājaputra*, apparently a mistake for *bhoktrmahārājaputra*, to Vatsarāja, who was probably a scion of the ruling family,[2] and seems to have been in the enjoyment of a fief called Mohadavāsaka,[3] which about sixty years back was in the personal enjoyment of Sīyaka[4] But the Paramāra records refer to more groups of villages than we find in the Cāhamāna records Thus they mention at least seven groups of villages, five groups in units of twelve or its multiple—the highest being of eighty-four, and two of them in units of sixteen or its multiple[5] These village groups have been taken as clan monarchies, having their origin in the division of the conquered land among the members of the ruling family[6] There is some support for this view in the mention of eighty-four rent-free villages in a Paramāra record of the second half of the eleventh century A D[7] The later *chaurāsi* (eighty-four) group of villages in Rājputāna shows that this formed the estate of some member of the ruling house But whether the clan system of administration covered the major part of the Paramāra kingdom cannot be said Nor can it be shown whether estates were granted to kinsmen as administrative units, or personal estates as fees for administrative service in a wider territorial unit Perhaps the latter hypothesis is more reasonable A grant of the Paramāra king Siyaka II in 949 refers to his personal estate comprising a whole district, out of

[1] *EI*, XXXIII, 38
[2] Ibid , 193
[3] Ibid , 38, ll 5–6
[4] Ibid , XIX, 39, Grant A, ll 8–14
[5] D C Ganguly, *History of the Paramāra Dynasty*, pp 236–8 A territorial unit called Bhumigrha-pascima-dvipañcāsatka mentioned in a charter of A D 1019 of Paramāra Bhoja suggests a district consisting of fifty-two villages, which neither fits in the pattern of the multiples of twelve nor in that of sixteen villages *EI*, XXXIII, 42, ll 5–6
[6] Baden-Powell, *Land System of India*, I, p 251, *The Indian Village Community*, 196–202, U N Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, pp 236 fn 2, 959
[7] *EI*, XIX, 10 ll 8–17 The term *mānyaka-patta* has been rendered as rent-free by R D Banerji, ibid , p 74

which he granted a village [1] This would suggest that he had been granted some personal estate as crown-prince, although as king he could now make grants out of his personal domain as well as the public domain At any rate the existing records do not prove that the Paramāra administration was mostly manned by the members of the ruling clan who were enfeoffed with personal estates for their support

We hear of about a half a dozen Paramāra official ranks, but we know of land grants only to a few officials One of them, a high police officer perhaps in charge of criminal administration, the *mahāsādhanika* śri Mahāika, had certainly been endowed with a village, which was regranted by Vākpatirāja of Dhāra in 980, at the request of the wife of that officer, to Bhatteśvari Devī at Ujjain [2] No such grants can be ascribed to the eleventh century A grant of 1110, recording two land donations by the povincial governor (*mahāmāndalika*) Rājadeva and one by his wife,[3] shows that the village out of which this gift was made was being enjoyed by the governor [4] His wife may also have been given some land for her maintenance Obviously the village had been allotted to him by the Paramāra king, who alone could notify the various officers, brāhmanas and the *pattakilas* of the grant made by the governor and his wife [5] This is a clear indication that the beneficiary was not free to transfer part of his fief, even for religious purposes, without the sanction of the donor A later copper-plate of 1260–61 states that Jayavarman II caused the *pratīhāra* Gangadeva to give a village to three brāhmanas [6] Since the endowment was actually made by this head of the palace guards, who underwent proper religious ceremonies for the purpose,[7] it is clear that the village was already in his possession Clearly the grant could not be issued without the permission of his master, who signed it with his own hand and made it a royal charter

[1] *sva-bhujyamana-mohadavasaka-visaya-sambaddha kumbhārotaka gramah* *EI* XIX, 39, Grants A, ll 8–14

[2] *IA*, XIV, 160 ll 9–14

[3] *EI*, XX 11 I have followed the rendering of N P Chakravarti and not that of R D Banerji (ibid , p 109)

[4] Ibid , ll, 5–6

[5] Ibid , ll, 4–7

[6] *EI*, IX, 13, B ll, 23–7

[7] Ibid , ll 28–36

(*rāja-śāsana*)[1] Had the king himself been the donor he would have performed religious formalities for making the benefaction Thus it is evident that *pratīhāras* were granted land as fees for their services Possibly other officers under the Paramāras were also granted land, but this cannot be shown on the basis of the present inscriptions

The Paramāra records mention feudatories and vassals such as *māndalikas* and *sāmantas* Some of these, although not related to the ruling houses, were granted large territories for administration An important example is that of the vassal (*tat-pādakamala-dhyāta*) of Śūrāditya, of the family of Śravanabhadra from Kanauj, who had been installed as the lord of Sangamakheta-*mandala* either by Bhoja or his father Sindhurāja[2] In return he provided military service to his overlord[3] He may have paid regular or occasional tributes, but that is not on record Presumably in consideration of military services Śūrāditya and his son and successor Jasorāja enjoyed complete ownership of land in their *mandala* For we find that in 1047, under Bhoja, Jasorāja made a gift of a whole village and also a hundred acres of land in another village to a Saivite deity śrī Ganteśvara without any reference whatsoever to his overlord[4] Some time between 1061 and 1100[5] there flourished in Nāsik a vassal called Yaśovarman, who had received half of the town Selluka from Bhoja,[6] and was also the proprietor (*bhoktā*) of 1500 villages,[7] granted to him by the same overlord Such a huge grant must have been made to this vassal for some very important services rendered to his sovereign Perhaps he helped the Paramāra king in the conquest of that area, which did not form a part of Mālwa proper[8] Since he was the governor of a whole *visaya* called Audrahādi, Bhoja had possibly

[1] Ibid , ll, 37–53

[2] *Proceedings of* (*later All-India*) *Oriental Conference*, I 325–6

[3] *sāhavāhana-samgrāme-anyesām-api bhubhujām hatva yodham sthirām laksmīm bhojadeva cakāra yah* Ibid , p 324

[4] Ibid , pp 325–6

[5] *EI*, XIX, 70

[6] *srī-bhojadeva-prasād-avapta-nagara se* [*lluk-ārddha*] Ibid , 10, 1 7

[7] *s-arddha-sahasra-grāmānām bhoktarah* Ibid , 1 8 D C Ganguly (*History of the Paramāra Dynasty*, p 236, fn 1) thinks that Selluka was a *mandala*, but *EI*, XIX, 10, ll 7–8, does not warrant such an interpretation

[8] We also hear of a land grant for military service by the Guhila chief Padmasimha in about 1197, *EI*, XXII, 37 verses 34–5

granted him half the town and 1500 villages also for administrative services Under Yaśovarman we have a remarkable example of subinfeudation In his *visaya* there lived *sāmanta* A(mma) *rānaka* of the Ganga family, who made a grant to a Jain temple[1] of four pieces of land of varying size, one of which he had received from a prince called Kakkapairāja and another from some townspeople Kakkapairāja may have been a Paramāra prince, but it is not clear whether the *sāmanta* had received any land from his immediate superior Yaśovarman

Under the Caulukyas of Gujarāt groups of 900 and 42 villages appear in a grant by Trilocanapāla of 1051,[2] which again reminds us of the distribution of the paternal dominion among the scions of the conquering clan But, as under the Cāhamānas and Paramāras, under the Caulukyas also areas were perhaps set apart for the personal upkeep of the ruling chief and his kinsmen Thus a grant of 1091 informs us that Karna I had for his enjoyment Ānandapura, to which was attached a unit of 126 villages [3] The unit of 126, a multiple of 42, suggests that at some stage this group may also have been assigned to a member of the ruling clan

What distinguishes the Caulukyas from other contemporary dynasties is the grant of very large territories to vassals and high officers, the two gradually merging into one another This can be inferred from the *Lekhapaddhati*, a model of documents compiled in the fifteenth century, as well as from the Caulukya copper-plates of the twelfth-thirteenth centuries The earliest documents referring to benefices granted by *mahāmātyas* (chief ministers) and *rānakas* to their vassals, who in return undertook to furnish their lords with a fixed number of horse and maintain law and order in their fiefs, are ascribed in the *Lekhapaddhati* to 745[4] (V S 802), a date assigned to many grants and other documents in that text [5] But we have no corroborative evidence of such a developed feudal practice in Gujarāt in the eighth century, on the other hand the

[1]*EI*, XIV, 10, ll 8–31

[2]*IA*, XII, 196 ff, verse 32

[3]*EI*, I, 36, ll 3–4 The term *sva-bhujyamana*, which occours frequently in the grants of Caulukya rulers, may mean the territory directly enjoyed by the king This term also occurs in an inscription of Mularāja dated 995 (*EI*, X, 17, l 3)

[4]p 7

[5]Ibid, pp 2, 8, 10–15

mention of a king as having conquered *Garjanikādhirāja* (Mahmud of Ghazni)[1] which expression is used in the inscriptions of 1206,[2] and 1223,[3] makes it clear that the specimen *śāsanapatra* dated V S 802 (A D 745) was in a style used five hundred years later The oldest material of the *Lekhapaddhati* may, however, be ascribed to the later half of the twelfth century, for it contains two typical expressions used in the Caulukya inscriptions of the period These are (i) *tan-niyukta-mahāmātya śrī-śrīkaraṇ-ādi-samasta-mudrā-vyāpārān paripanthayati sati*,[4] and (ii) *niyukta dandanāyaka* [5] Hence many documents dated in V S 1288 (A D 1231) cannot be far removed from the time to which they refer One of these throws light on the role of the great vassal Lavanaprasāda, whose beginnings as a feudal lord can be traced back to an inscription of Ajayapāla dated 1173 He was appointed a military governor [*danda* (*nāyaka*)] of Udayapura, situated in the Bhāillasvāmi-*mahādvādaśaka mandala*, where he granted a village situated in a *pathaka* unit of sixty-four villages, to Śiva [6] Whatever may have been the territorial jurisdiction of Lavanaprasāda, it is clear that he could make grants of land in his area without the authorisation of the king This would imply that he functioned as a full-fledged vassal who could do whatever be liked in his dominions provided he fulfilled certain obligations From a document in the *Lekhapaddhati* dated 1231 we learn that under Bhīma he flourished as a *mahāmandalādhipati rānaka*, enjoying the *pathaka* of Khetakādhāra as a benefice (*prasāda-pattalā*) granted to him by his overlord [7] There is no doubt that this benefice had given him enormous powers, for according to the inscription of 1173 Lavanaprasāda was a governor appointed by Ajayapāla

[1] Ibid , p 2

[2] *IA*, VI, 194, ll 1–11 This expression is applied to Mularaja II, who reigned from 1175 to 1178

[3] Ibid , p 197, ll 14–15

[4] *IA*, XVIII, 343, ll 5–6 Some letters at the beginning of the inscription are missing

[5] Ibid , 347, l 6

[6] *IA*, XVIII, 347, ll 1–11 The Prakṛt word Lunapasāka given in the inscription is another form of Sanskrit Lavanaprasada, which name occurs in the *Lekhapaddhati*, p 5

[7] *prabhoh prasāda-nmahāmandalādhipāti-rānaka-sri-lāvanyadeva prasādena prasāda-pattalayam bhujyamana-khetakadhara-pathaka tan-niyukta-dandanāyaka sri-mādhavaprabhrti-pañcakula-pratipattau tamra-śasanam likhyate yathā LP*, p 5

(*tan-niyukta dandanāyaka*),[1] but now he appointed his own governor in the Khetakādhāra *pathaka* (*tan-niyukta-dandanāyaka śri-mādhava*) [2] Under Ajayapāla in 1175 we hear of another powerful vassal, the Cāhamāna *mahāmandaleśvara* Vaijalladeva, who was governing the province on the banks of the river Narmadā through the favour of the king (*ajayapāladevena-prasādī-krtya*) [3] The chief granted a village in his *mandala* without asking assent from his lord,[4] which shows that he enjoyed the legal right of subinfeudation It is not clear whether the *pathaka* in which he made this grant had been given to him by Ajayapāla by means of a *pattalā*, which is defined in the *Lekhapaddhati* as a charter conveying a fief for certain stated services The earliest epigraphic *pattalā* so far known in Gujarāt seems to have been that granted in 1209 to a *mahāmātya-pratihāra* (one combining the office of a minister and head of palace-guards) Somarājadeva, who seems to have received the whole of Saurāstra-*mandala* as a fief from Bhimadeva [5] Much later in 1260 we hear of a *pattalā*, assigning probably a *pathaka* to a *mahāmandaleśvara rānaka* [6]

The examples quoted make it clear that the ruling houses of Northern India, especially of Uttar Pradesh, Central India, Rājasthān, Mālwa and Gujarāt, assigned villages for secular services to their vassals and officials The fact that they recorded many grants on stone or copper indicates not only the growing practice of land assignments but also the growing importance of the secular functionaries, who probably insisted on obtaining permanent title-deeds

A typical mode of payment to officers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was to earmark regular and exclusive levies for them Under the Kalacuris of Baghelkhand lower functionaries such as *pattakilas* (village headmen in charge of revenue collection) and *dustasādhyas* (police officials in charge of criminal administration) were paid in revenues This can be inferred from a grant of Jayasimha (1163–88) to a brāhmana, who is given a

[1] *IA*, XVIII, 347, ll 1–11

[2] *LP*, p 5

[3] *IA*, XVIII, 84–5, ll 7–8

[4] Ibid , ll 9–21

[5] *asya-prabhoh prasād-āvāpta-pattalayā bhujyamana-sri saurastra-mandale* *IA*, XVIII, 113, ll 19–23 These technical terms occur exactly in connection with a model *tāmrasāsana* dated 1231 in the *Lekhapaddhati*, p 5

[6] *EI*, XVIII, 210 ff , ll 8–10

village with various rights including taxes (*ādāya*) levied for *pattakilas* and *dustasādhyas* [1] Obviously the *pattakila* collected other royal revenues, besides his own share as his remuneration, and as such under weak rulers he could exercise some kind of control over the village land But this cannot be said of the *dustasādhya*, who was entitled only to his own portion Taxes were also earmarked for three other kinds of officers, *visenima*, *vaisayika* and *ardha-purusārika*,[2] whose functions cannot be determined Whatever might be the connection of these officials with the village land, there is no doubt that they were assigned certain revenues for their pay This was not typical of the Kalacuris, for under the Candellas some lower officials, and under the Gāhadavālas even higher officials, were apportioned specified revenues for their maintenance

Under the Candellas officers were assigned certain rights in the villages This development began in the later half of the twelfth century under Paramardin, whose religious grants of 1172 and 1178 enjoin the feudatories, royal officials, forest officials, constables, etc, to give up their perquisites in the villages transferred as gifts [3] The practice continued under Trailokyavarman, in whose grant of 1208 to a hereditary brāhmana *rāuta* only feudatories and royal officials are asked to give up the rights [4] Whether these perquisites were allowed to royal officials in addition to their regular pay (either in kind or land grants) is not clear But such a practice was bound to create intermediaries with some interests in the land of the tenants We do not know whether the officials deprived of their rights were otherwise compensated Nevertheless, occasional resumption of such rights may have prevented perquisites from crystallising into control over the land, which was further made difficult by the plurality of claims to the produce of the peasants

In the Gāhadavāla kingdom officials enjoyed certain specified sources of revenue The *aksapatalika* (officer in charge of accounts and revenues) was entitled to his share of the produce, perhaps amounting to a *prastha* per household, known variously as

[1] *CII*, IV, 63, ll 19–25, Appendix no 4

[2] Ibid

[3] *rāja-rājapurus-atavika-cat-ādibhih svam svam-abhavyam pariharttavyam* *EI*, XVI, no 2, ll 28–9, ibid, XX, 14, plate B, ll 21–3

[4] *CI*, XXXI, no II, l 17

aksapatala-prastha[1] or *aksapatal-ādāya*[2] Another official, the *pratīhāra* (doorkeeper or the head of the palace guards), was entitled to a similar share in the produce of the villagers[3] We also come across a tax called *viśatiathū-prastha*,[4] which on the analogy of the *aksapatala-prastha* and *pratīhāra-prastha* was a *prastha* of the produce paid to some officer But it is difficult to find any equivalent of *viśatiathu* in the Gāhadavāla list of officials, which is obviously not exhaustive We wonder whether he was in charge of the revenue collection of twenty-eight villages, since we come across a unit of eighty-four villages in a copper-plate of Madanapāla[5] Whatever might be the position and functions of this officer it is not clear whether the *prastha* contribution made to those three officers accounted for their total remuneration or just formed an additional emolument Here also, since the same peasant had to pay several officers, no one of them could claim rights over his land Moreover, this practice was not widespread, for the three terms discussed above are mentioned only in the copper-plates of the *mahārājaputra* Govindacandra[6] The term *aksapatala-prastha*, *pratīhāra-prastha* and *viśatiathū-prastha* are mentioned in the Basāhi plate of 1104[7] The term *aksapatal-ādāya* occurs in a grant of 1109[8] and the term *vimśaticchavatha* (perhaps a variation of *viśatiathū-prastha*) in a grant of 1103[9] It seems that towards the beginning of the twelfth century A D some Gāhadavāla officials had become so powerful as to claim grants of perquisites for themselves

The practice was limited under the Cāhamānas, who, in order to support a class of military officers known as *balādhipas* imposed a special levy upon the villagers A copper-plate of 1162 records the grant of a cess called *balādhip-ābhāvya* of one village to one

[1] *IA*, XIV, 103, l 12
[2] *IA*, XVIII, 17, l 21
[3] *IA*, XIV, 103, l 12, *EI*, II, 29
[4] *IA*, XIV, 103, l 12, cf *EI*, II, 29, 11, ll 15–16
[5] *Journal of U P Historical Society*, XIV, 66 ff ll 10–11 Reading amended by Niyogi, op cit, Appendix B, 8, p 247
[6] Niyogi, op cit, p 167
[7] *IA*, XIV, 103, l 12
[8] Ibid, XVIII 18–19, ll 20–8
[9] *EI*, II, 29, I, ll 15–16

temple[1] and of another village to another temple[2] by Alhana, the feudatory of the Caulukya king Kumārapāla It has been suggested that this due meant a certain share in the revenues of the custom-house or the *mandapikā* with which the *balādhipa* was connected [3] But since in both cases the cess was levied from the villagers, it seems to have been one of the dues collected from the peasants, and falls in the same category as the *aksapatala-prastha* and *pratīhāra-prastha* under the Gāhadavālas But we have no means to determine whether the *bālādhip-ābhāvya* formed the whole or a part of the fee of the *balādhipa*, who stood next in rank to the *senāpati*

The origin and evolution of the levies meant for various officials deserve some attention What began in the early centuries of the Christian era as supply of provisions and rations for boarding and lodging such policemen and soldiers (*cātas* and *bhatas*) as visited the countryside to apprehend criminals eventually developed into regular fees reserved for *pattakila*, *dustasādhya*, *aksapatala*, *pratīhāra*, *balādhipa*, and various other government functionaries (*rājapurusās*) In earlier times the provisions to be supplied by the villagers for the boarding and lodging of the touring officers are specified in the Vākātaka, Pallava and Kadamba grants [4] A small tax, *vasati-danda*, was also levied for the purpose and probably collected in kind [5] In the sixth century a tax called *jemaka-kara-bhara* was levied for providing meals to royal officers in some parts of Madhya Pradesh [6] But the early grants do not speak of any regular dues meant for the remuneration of royal functionaries The only tax that can be possibly interpreted in this light is *rāj-ābhāvya*, dues meant for members of the royal family, which appears in the Gupta period in some grants from Central India [7] In the later period, in the time of the Pālas, *rāja-bhāvya*, *rājakuliya*, *rājakul-ābhāvya* or *rājakul-ādeya* was levied for the maintenance of the royal family Generally we do not come across these dues after the tenth century, because members

[1] *Early Chauhān Dynasties*, p 187, plate II, ll 9–11
[2] Ibid, ll 13–14
[3] Ibid, p 295, fn 85
[4] *CII* IV, 156 fn 2
[5] Ibid
[6] Ibid, 120, ll 18–20
[7] *CII*, III, 26, ll 11–12, 27, l 13, 28, l 20

of the ruling family, princes and queens, were now assigned fiefs for their maintenance But probably the system did not cover all the royal officials, some of whom were allotted definite dues for their upkeep What was occasional contribution to lower royal functionaries and perhaps regular payment to the royal household in earlier times became a normal imposition for the support of some officers of the Kalacuris, Candellas, Gāhadavālas and Cāhamānas A parallel practice obtained under the Śilāhāras in Mahārāstra, where hereditary holders of the office of *nārgāvunda* were not given gold for their salary but assigned certain taxes as long as they performed the functions of their office [1] Hence to specify items of revenue for payment of officers was a distinct development of this period

Although both vassals and officials were paid in land grants, there existed certain differences between the two Civil and military officers such as the *purohitas*, *jyotisis*, *sāndhivigrahikas*, *sacivas*, *pratīhāras*, *mahāsādhanikas*, *mahāmātyas*, etc , were granted land for more or less well-defined functions, which pertained to their respective offices But the vassals had numerous functions to perform The members of the ruling clan of the Cāhamānas and Paramāras were possibly charged with all kinds of duties, executive, judicial and military, on the king's behalf in the areas placed under them, and as fees they received personal estates comprising a certain number of villages Similar undifferentiated functions were probably performed by many vassals, who were not related to the king Although the inscriptions mention numerous grades of vassal, such as *rājā*, *rājarājanaka*, *rānaka*, *rājaputra*, *thakkura*, *sāmanta*, *mahāsāmanta*, *mahāsāmantādhipati*, *mahāsāmanta-rānaka*, *sāmantaka-rājā*, *bhoktā*, *bhogika*, *bhogijana*, *bhogapatika*, *brhadbhogika*,[2] etc , the surviving epigraphic records refer only to grants made to *sāmantas*, *mahāsāmantas*, *rānakas*, *rājaputras*, and *māndalikas* How wide was the area entrusted to each category of these vassals is difficult to say The *Śukranitisāra*, which contains some terms used in the inscriptions of the eleventh-twelfth centuries, defines a *sāmanta* as the governor of a hundred villages, yielding an annual revenue of 13,00,000

[1] *EI*, XXVII, 179 and fn 1

[2] Some of these have been listed in R K Choudhary's article in *JIH*, XXXVII, 389

karsas [1] The same source states that the annual income of the *māndalika* is from 3,00,000 to 10,00,000 *karsas* [2] These statements may give some idea of the relative status of the vassals, but they cannot be taken literally Whatever might be the size of the areas assigned to vassals, some *rānakas* and *mandaleśvaras* enjoyed practical ownership of land, for they executed religious grants without the permission of their overlords In contrast to them the officials, including the provincial governor, had to secure the order of their master in order to make such gifts Further, many vassals were connected by blood with their lord, but officials generally did not have such ties with the king Even the vassals were not always related to the ruling house The Pālas granted land to the Kaivarttas, with whom they had no blood connections whatsoever Similarly there is nothing to show that the *sāmantas* in Orissa and *rānakas* in Gujarāt were the kinsmen of their overlords Most officials who were granted fiefs in the other parts of the country did not belong to the kin of the grantor—a feature characteristic of the Rājput polity in Rājasthān and Gujarāt Epigraphic evidence shows that in India land grants were first made to priests and only later extended to non-priestly elements such as brāhmana, kāyastha and unrelated ksatriya officials and vassals The grant of land was not necessarily governed by the kinship principle, but by the need of rewarding services

The relation between the vassal and the lord in Northern India during our period partly resembles the state of affairs in France and Germany, where the chief obligation of the vassals was to provide military service to their lord [3] The literary and epigraphic records leave no doubt that the most important duty of the vassal was to furnish military aid to the lord The *Tilakamañjari* of Dhanapāla has numerous references to show that the *sāmantas* invariably accompanied the lord in military expeditions,[4] and the same impression is created by Merutunga's *Prabandhacintāmani*,[5] which shows that, along with the *mantrins*, the *sāmantas* constituted

[1] Tr , B K Sarkar, I 365–7, 381–2, Recently L Gopal has shown that the text was compiled in the first half of the ninteenth century (*BSOAS*, XXV, pt 3, 1962)

[2] Ibid , I 368–74

[3] In England they were also expected to tender counsel to their overlord in running the affairs of the realm and assist him in the administration of justice Such an obligation was not demanded of the vassals in India

[4] pp 71, 74, 93, 100

[5] pp 17, 32, 80

an important element of the body politic [1] Although the Pālas maintained a standing army consisting of peoples of various nationalities,[2] the plight of Rāmapāla at the time of the Kaivartta revolt shows how utterly dependent the later Pālas were on the military aid of their feudatories During our period the dynasties of Northern India probably relied more on the quotas supplied to them by their vassals than on their own forces Perhaps each ruler kept some permanent military force, but how the soldiers were paid from the eleventh century onwards is not known Laksmidhara, the minister of the Gāhadavāla king Govindacandra, enjoins that in addition to their remuneration (*vetana*) distinguished warriors should be rewarded with clothes and other things [3] But the use of the term *vetana* is not sufficient to establish that salaries were paid in cash

Military beneficiaries appear as a very numerous class of grantees in our inscriptions, and are known as the *rāutas* under the Candellas and Gāhadavālas, and the *rājaputras* under the Caulukyas The term *rāuta* is an early vernacular form of the Sanskrit *rājaputra*, and it possibly indicated a rank in mediaeval times In its literal meaning the term can be applied only to the Cāhamāna, and possibly the Caulukya, *rājaputras*, who were the scions of the respective royal families But the *rāutas* in Bundelkhand and Uttar Pradesh belonged to the brāhmaṇa, ksatriya and kāyastha communities, and were mostly unrelated to the ruling clan The Candella grants leave no doubt that the *rāutas* were granted land for military service This possibly also accounts for six grants to the ksatriya *rāuta* Rājyadharavarman under the Gāhadavāla king Jayaccandra Thus the *rāuta* seems to have been a vassal whose dominant function in the state was rendering military service, which, according to the *Lekhapaddhati*, was also the most important obligation of his counterpart, the *rājaputra* A similar class of military vassals known as *nāyakas*, some of them of the vaiśya caste, existed under the Eastern Gangas, who made several land grants to them The *Śukranītisāra* defines the *nāyaka* as a functionary appointed over ten villages, but the inscriptions do not give any precise idea about his territorial jurisdiction

[1] p 17

[2] *gauda-mālava-khasa-hūna-kulika-karnnāta-lāta-cāta-bhata-sevak-ādin* *EI*, XXIX, IB, ll 38–9

[3] *Kṛtyakalpataru*, XI, 82

What is more important is that some families held the rank of *rāuta* or *nāyaka*, especially the first, consecutively for three generations This led to the emergence of a considerable hereditary military class, living on fiefs assigned to its members [1] The new development, not found in earlier times, strongly reminds us of similar hereditary military families in Europe

Inscriptions indicate that during this period the vassals played an important part in politics and administration Their role in some succession disputes was decisive The earlier case of Gopāla is well known In later times succession to the throne seems to have been decided by the feudal elements, here we may quote the examples of Sālastambha in Assam, of the Somavamśi rulers of Orissa, and also of the Cāhamānas Thus when Pṛthivirāja II died sonless, the ministers, who in our opinion were hardly different from feudal lords, brought over Someśvara from Gujarāt and put him on the throne of Ajmer On his death they made the widowed Queen Karpūradevi the regent for her minor son Pṛthivīrāja III [2] Similarly in Kashmir along with the ministers, *mantrins* and *ekāngas*, the *sāmantas* were sometimes summoned to choose the king [3]

In certain areas during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries princes were not as free to make land grants as they had been earlier The authority of the *mahāmātya*, who was a kind of highly feudalised ministerial functionary in the Caulukya kingdom, had to be invoked in the charters issued by the Caulukya rulers—a practice never followed in earlier times While this did not fetter the hands of the donor, it certainly made him consult fully with the *mahāmātya* in regard to land grants

Early grants only name the officers, especially the minister of peace and war and the *dūtaka* responsible for the execution of the grant They rarely indicate whether these officials approved of the grants But some grants of our period, particularly of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, record their consent to land gifts Thus a plate of the Paramāra king Jayavarman II (in 1260–61) records the approbation of the *sāndhivigrahika*, the

[1] The problem has been discussed at length by Dr (Mrs) K K Gopal in 'Feudal Composition of the Army in Early Medieval India' in the *Journal of Andhra Historical Research Society*, XXVIII, 30–49

[2] Dasharatha Sharma, op cit , p 199

[3] *Rājataranginī*, V 250

paṇḍita Mālādhara, to a grant of a village made by Jayavarman to some brāhmanas [1] The growing importance of the vassals and officials in relation to land grants is also indicated by some Sena charters Early Sena grants contain not more than two endorsements, one by the king and the other by the *mahāsāndhivigrahika* But the grants of the twenty-fifth and twenty-seventh year of the reign of Laksmanasena demonstrate the increasing dominance of high officials, mostly feudalised, whose favour and assent were considered desirable for the maintenance of the grants A grant records the endorsement of as many as five dignitaries, probably including the king [2]

Despite the influence exercised by the vassals in politics and administration they were never organised in any group or council as in England The term *sāmanta-cakra*, the circle of vassals, so familiar in literature and inscriptions, is nothing more than a cliché which does not indicate any corporate body Perhaps it was used in the same manner as *kavicakra* (circle of poets) [3] The vassals may have constituted some sort of court presided over by the overlord, but it cannot be regarded as a deliberative assembly through which the organised voice of the barons was expressed At best it seems to have been the prototype of the *durbār* which developed in Muslim times and not of the mother of Parliament which developed in mediaeval England The vassals may have performed judicial, legislative and administrative functions separately in their respective jurisdictions, but they never did this jointly as a body Nevertheless, the *sāmantas* had come to be recognised as a hereditary social class, as can be inferred from the adjective *sāmanta-janmā* applied to Vākpatirāja Sūri It is said that although he was born as a *sāmanta* he attained the highest position among the leading poets [4]

The general trend towards feudalising officials reached its height during our period This was reflected not only in paying them by land grants but also in giving them high-sounding titles which were not meant to indicate their functions but to emphasise their high rank This tendency is most marked in Bengal and

[1] *EI*, IX, 119

[2] *JRASB*, series III, VIII, 34–5, the five endorsements are of (1) *srī ni*, (2) *mahāsam ni*, (3) *sre madrāja ni*, (4) *sre madsankara ni* and (5) *srīmat sahasamolla ni*

[3] *Udayasundarīkatha*, p 27

[4] *sāmanta-janm-api kavivaranām mahattamo vakpatirājasūrih* Ibid, p 154

Bihar Thus a mere *mahāmāndalika* Iśvaraghosa, a feudatory of the Pālas, addresses his grant to more than four dozen officials, of whom thirteen bear the prefix *mahā*[1] (great) Similarly another *mahāmāndalika*, Samgrāma Gupta of south Monghyr, notifies his grant to various officials and dignitaries, eighteen of whom bear the prefix *mahā* [2] The charters of the Pālas and the other dynasties of Bengal and Bihar mark a progressive rise in the number of officials with the prefix *mahā* in their designations In the beginning they mention four or five under Dharmapāla and Devapāla, later nine under Nārāyaṇapāla, Vallālasena and Laksmanasena, next seventeen under Iśvaraghosa, and finally eighteen under Saṃgrāma Gupta, when the feudalisation of officials reaches its zenith Here it is striking that the lower the power of the lord the larger the number of the dignitaries bearing the title *mahā* in his kingdom, and similarly the later the kingdom the greater the number of *mahā*-bearing functionaries

Curiously enough feudal lords in other parts of India do not display much love of high-flown titles, except in the Kalacuri kingdom where as many as fourteen functionaries have the title *mahā* affixed to their names [3] But the title *rānaka* and *thakkura* become common feudal epithets in Northern India and are applied indiscriminately to officials of different castes and categories This is best illustrated in the case of kāyastha scribes, who were invested with these titles to indicate their feudal and social rank and not their functions It seems that officials were placed in various feudal categories according to their political status and importance

Since the first land grants were made to priests and temples, who continued to receive the majority of these throughout our period, most grants to officials and vassals faithfully followed the religious form and even repeated the imprecatory verses The religious draft could well be used for those brāhmanas who held civil and military offices, for, because of their hereditary religious

[1]These may be enumerated as *mahāsandhivigrahika*, *mahāpratihara* *mahakaranādhyakṣa*, *mahāpadamūlika*, *mahabhogapati*, *mahātantrādhikrta*, *mahāvyuhapati*, *mahādandanāyaka*, *mahākāyastha*, *mahabalakosthika*, *mahābalādhikarnika*, *mahāsāmanta* and *mahākatuka* *IB*, III, 156–7, ll 10–21

[2]*JBORS*, V, 593–4, ll, 6–8

[3]*CII*, IV, 48, ll 32–5 The list, however, also includes *mahādevī* and *maharājaputra*

position, they were entitled to gifts in their own right But in the grants to non-brāhmana vassals and officials the prevailing form had to be adopted for want of an alternative Gradually there evolved a form of draft for secular grants, slowly deviating from its religious prototype Thus in a grant to a kāyastha minister in Orissa, about the beginning of the eleventh century, the clause of perpetual endowment is left out,[1] although the provisions relating to the enjoyment of all rights in the village and the spiritual merit accruing to the donor are retained This also applies to a few grants made by the Candellas to *rāutas* [2] A Candella grant made to a hereditary brāhmana *rāuta* also omits the clause of perpetual tenure [3] But this provision is retained in a Śilāhāra charter of 1115, according to which Gaṇḍarāditya assigned two villages to his vassal (*sāmanta*) Nolamba to be enjoyed by his descendants as long as the sun and moon last,[4] although he did not speak of religious merit in this context However, no epigraphic land grant is couched in an entirely secular form This terminology, briefly provided in the lawbooks of the Gupta period, is elaborated in the *Lekhapaddhati*, which dispenses with religious formulae in its specimens of grants by *rājas*, *mahāmātyas* and *rānakas* The exact epigraphic duplicates of these charters (*pattalās*) have not yet been discovered, although it is definite that these were granted by the Caulukya rulers The origin of the term *pattalā* is obscure But if it is taken as an early form of the Hindī word *pattal* (Gujarāti *pātal*), it would imply provision for food or maintenance The Candella grants of the thirteenth century use the term *prasādena pradatta*, bestowed by the favour of the king [5] The grants of Western India of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries use the phrase *prabhu-prasād-āvāpta*, acquired through the favour of the lord [6] Such wordings do not characterise grants to gods and priests, and indicate that in legal terms the beneficiary did not owe the grant to his services or ability but to the favour and goodwill of the master Curiously enough none of the secular grants clearly states the obligations of the benefeciaries, which are

[1] *EI*, XXIX, 26
[2] Ibid, XVI, 20, XX, IC
[3] *EI*, XXXI, 11 This was an hereditary military family for four generations
[4] *EI*, XXVI, 32, ll 38–61
[5] *EI*, XVI, 20, l 11, XX, 14C, l 14
[6] Ibid, XIX, 10, l 17 The variant *Prasādi-krtya* is found in *IA*, XVIII, 84–5, l 8

laid down only by the *Lekhapaddhati* Therefore for the country as a whole there did not exist any legal norm to which the parties could appeal in case of dispute or violation of agreements entered between the two

The didactic texts generally do not impose any obligations either on the *sāmantas* or on their lords, political experience was hardly embodied in ideology The only theoretical text which seems to define the duties of the vassals is the *Agni Purāna*, a work of about the tenth-eleventh century, and what it states is mainly based on the *Kāmandaka Nītisāra*, ascribed to the eighth century A D The *sāmantas* are advised to assuage public feeling, to help their overlord in war, to mobilise his (the overlord's) allies and auxiliaries, and to distinguish friends from enemies They are further asked to protect the people (*janatrānam*) like a fort[1]—a function that devolved on them from their sovereign On the other hand the king is advised to be on his guard against the vassals, whose revolt is considered to be an external danger in contrast to the internal danger caused by the disaffection of princes, ministers and other high functionaries[2] The *Agni Purāna* therefore instructs the king to destroy disloyal feudatories[3] But hardly any other didactic text of the period prescribes the mutual obligations of the sovereign and vassals

The only legal text which clearly defines the obligations of the fief-holders is the *Lekhapaddhati*, which reflects conditions in Gujarāt in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries This text refers to three kinds of charters written on the bark of the birch-tree (a) the charter of a king (*rājñe bhūrja-pattalā*) who could grant a *rānaka* a country (*desa*), probably a *mandala* under the Caulukyas, excluding the grants made to temples and brāhmanas,[4] (b) the charter of a *mahāmātya* (*mahāmātya-pattalā*) issued to a *rānaka* who accepted it and undertook to pay all dues to the grantor loyally and honestly,[5] and (c) finally the charter of a *rānaka* (*rānaka-pattalā*) The last deserves special attention, for it provides us details which are not found under the first two heads In this case a *rājaputra* applies to the *rānaka* for a fief When he is granted a village, he is

[1]Tr M N Dutt, II, 865
[2]226 11
[3]227 53
[4]*LP*, p 7
[5]Ibid

required not only to maintain law and order in it, and collect revenues according to old, just practices, but also to furnish one hundred foot-soldiers and twenty cavalry for the service of the *rānaka* at his headquarters [1] What is further important is that he acquires some sort of right over the land granted to him This can be inferred from one of his obligations, which does not allow him to make gifts of uncultivated land to temples and brāhmanas [2] This may imply that he is authorised to make grants only of cultivated land in the village This clause therefore reverses the old practice sanctioned by the *bhūmicchidranyāya*, according to which at first only waste land was granted to priests and temples, although from the fifth century onwards this technical term continued to be used even in grants of cultivated land [3] The insertion of the above provision would suggest that by the end of the twelfth century in Gujārat the progressive role of land grants in opening waste land to cultivation had practically come to an end

The contracts given in the *Lekhapaddhati* are important because they clearly state the obligations of the parties, so difficult to infer from the inscriptions This is not done in the first *pattalā*, but the second, and especially the third, indicate a full-fledged feudal polity in Gujārat They clearly show that the king or his *mahāmātya*—these two together, are invariably referred to in twelfth and thirteenth century Caulukya epigraphic grants made by vassals—granted fiefs to *rānakas*, and they subinfeuded land to the *rājapūtras*

In their turn, the *rājaputras*, as we learn from the forms of contracts for the collection of the village revenues (*grāma-pattakas*), farmed out their villages to merchants and their associates, who applied to them for the purpose [4] According to one document the *pañcakula* led by a merchant or accountant (*mahantaka*) is entrusted with the work of collection on condition of paying 3000 drammas as the main head of revenue, 216 drammas for rewards to the *pañcakula*, and forty drammas for

[1] *gramasya asya āya-padam bhogavata (bhuñjatā) padatijana* 100 *ghotaka* 20 *etaih ghotaka manusaih katake rajadhānyām srī-asmakam seva karya* Ibid

[2] *navatara-bhūmi sasane kasy-āpi devasya viprasya va na datdvyā* *LP*, p 7

[3] Supra, pp 29–30

[4] *LP*, pp 8–9

miscellaneous expenses [1] The main revenue is to be paid in three instalments [2] In addition to the stipulated amount the merchant and his associates are required to pay any increased rent, a tax imposed on the village for honouring a particular man, a tax on villagers on the birth of a prince to the royal or chief's family and similar other occasions, and charges for a police station [3] The village collectors are also charged with the responsibility of safeguarding the roads that pass through the village The contract has to be accompanied by a guarantee given by another *rājaputra*, who undertakes to make the merchant and his associates pay [4] The document which gives these details is dated 745, but there is no doubt that it throws light on the revenue system in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries The practice of *grāma-pattakas* shows that many *rājaputras* held more than one village, from which they could not collect taxes themselves And hence, having made the assessment in terms of cash, they entrusted the collection to merchants, who because of thriving trade and commerce in Gujarāt were in a position to accept this responsibility They were not revenue farmers making the highest bid, but agents bound by the amount agreed upon in the contract The real master of the village was the *rājaputra*, who could not only grant land but also increase taxes and farm them out to whomsoever he liked

The *grāma-pattakas* were apparently valid for a year, but there is no indication of any time limit in the charters granted by *rājās*, *mahāmātyas* and *rāṇakas* Perhaps they lasted for life or during good behaviour, and presumably had to be renewed on the death of either party It is not clear whether in case of a dispute between the *rāṇaka* and his vassal *rājaputra* the king intervened Since these agreements were written on the birch bark, none have come to light, but there is no reason to doubt their authenticity

By and large the relation between the lord and the vassal seems to have been regulated by custom, which was not clearly defined anywhere before about the thirteenth century In the earlier period when kingdoms were larger the lord could take advantage

[1] Ibid , p 9
[2] Ibid
[3] *catapaka-malamargana-māngaliyaka-caturaka-palitam desācārena datavyam LP*, p 9
[4] *LP*, p 9

of the absence of written law to exact more obligations than were customary from the vassals, but in the period under review it would work the other way The vassal could exploit the situation in his favour, for there could be no better condition for asserting his power than the presence of numerous kingdoms in Northern India on the eve of the Turkish conquest

The theoretical position that vassals and high functionaries should be remunerated by grants of land came to be well recognised in the twelfth century Earlier texts expatiate on the merits of grants of villages for religious purposes but do not recommend large-scale grants for secular purposes, which is unequivocally done by the *Mānasollāsa*, a work of the twelfth century It advises the king to make various kinds of gifts, including those of territories, to leading vassals (*sāmantamānyakas*) and various grades of ministers,[1] such as *mantrins*, *amātyas* and *sacivas* Gifts should be also made to servants (*bhrtyas*), kinsmen (*bāndhavas*) and other people who render military help to the king and tender him counsel [2] Altogether sixteen kinds of secular gifts are listed, and they include not only distribution of villages, towns, mines and marks of honour comprising seats, *cāmara*, umbrella and means of conveyance but also that of virgin girls and prostitutes [3] Of the land assignments mentioned herein are *deśyam*, the gift of a subdivision (*rāstra*) presumably exempt from taxes, *karajam*, a similar gift with the obligation to pay taxes,[4] and *grāmajam*, the gift of a village with or without taxes [5]

The practice of making land grants had become almost universal in Mālwa and Gujarāt This is reflected in a chapter of the *Prabandhacintāmani* of Merutunga, dealing with the Paramāra Bhoja and the Caulukya Bhima He states that the lord of the country gives away a village, the lord of the village a field, and the lord of the field some vegetables, every contented person gives away his property [6] This would imply that ownership of the village by individuals had come to be recognised as a normal

[1] II 1006
[2] Ibid , 1007
[3] Ibid , 1010-11
[4] Ibid , 1014
[5] Ibid , 1016
[6] *des-adhīso grāmam-ekam dadāti, grām -adhisah ksetram -ekam dadāti, ksetradhīṣah -simbhikāh-sampradatte, sarvas-tuṣtah-sampadam-svam-dadāti Prabandhacintāmani*, p 57

feature by 1304, when Merutunga completed his work Many of these *grāmādhiśas* may have been Jain and brāhmana temples and individuals, but others may have been just vassals or officials who were granted villages by the Paramāra and Caulukya rulers In some cases the *pattakilas*,[1] who were so designated because they received charters (*patas*) for revenue collection from the king, may have developed into village lords, with the difference that they had to forward a portion of the revenues collected to the central treasury

In spite of numerous references to the term *sāmanta* and its various formations and synonyms the earlier texts do not provide any ideological basis for political feudalism, which shows that it had not taken any deep roots in the consciousness of the people before the eleventh century A D Even the legal commentaries do not betray awareness of the new development, for the *Mitāksarā* continues to use the term *sāmanta* in the traditional sense of neighbour Surprisingly enough the theoretical basis of political feudalism is found in the texts on art and architecture An integrated theoretical picture of feudal hierarchy is provided by the *Mānasāra*, a work of about the twelfth century Chapter 42 of this text classifies kings in descending order of status into nine classes, *cakravartin*, *mahārāja*, (or *adhirāja*,) *mahendra* (or *narendra*), *pārsnika*, *pattadhara*, *mandalesa*, *pattabhāj*, *prahāraka* and *astragrāhin* [2] The number of their horses, elephants, soldiers, women and queens is prescribed accordingly The *astragrāhin*, the lowest in rank, is entitled to have 500 horses, 500 elephants, 50,000 soldiers, 500 women attendants and one queen [3] This equipment goes on multiplying with increase in rank till it reaches the highest figure in the case of the *cakravartin* or universal monarch [4] The *Mānasāra* also describes nine kinds of crowns and nine kinds of thrones according to the difference in status of the rulers [5] What is most important for our purpose is the differing rate of royal revenue according to the position of the king The *cakravartin* takes only one-tenth of the produce as his share, the *mahārāja* takes one-sixth, the *narendra* one-fifth, the *pārsnika* one-fourth

[1] *EI*, IX, 13, 1 18, *IA* VI, 48 ff
[2] P K Acharya, *Mānasara Series*, VI, 125
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid , 126, this is found in Ch 45 and 49 of the text

and the *pattadhara* one-third [1] The exact rates of the other four kinds of rulers *mandaleśa*, *pattabhāj*, *prāhāraka* and *astragrāhin* are not given, but the context would make it half and even more than half of the produce What is the significance of this type of formulation? In our opinion the whole scheme visualises a state of affairs in which the ruler of a lower rank is in a position where he has to pay tribute to the ruler of a higher rank, only in this context can we understand a system in which the lower the royal rank the higher the revenue to be extracted by its holder from the subjects

Similarly the *Aparājitaprcchā* of Bhatta Bhuvanadeva, a work of the twelfth century,[2] enumerates in descending order nine categories of rulers known as *mahīpati*, *rājā*, *narādhipa*, *mahāmandaleśvara*, *māndalika*, *mahāsāmanta*, *sāmanta*, *laghusāmanta*, and *caturaśika* [3] In each case the extent of territory held is specified, and it ranges from the whole earth in respect of the *mahipati* and 1000 villages in respect of the *caturaśika* [4] The lowest category is not given any nomenclature, but apprently the holders of villages from one to twenty and probably 100 are placed in this class [5] Although the division of rulers laid down in the two texts on architecture does not seem to have been observed, this framework fits in with the feudalisation of political structure in mediaeval times, which provides many instances of graded subordinate relations linked up with tribute and service

The *Aparājitaprcchā* also describes the composition of a typical feudal court It recommends that the emperor (*samrāt*) who holds the title of *mahārājādhirāja parameśvara* should have in his court 4 *mandalesas*, 12 *māndalikas*, 16 *mahāsāmantas*, 32 *sāmantas*, 160 *laghusāmantas*, and 400 *caturaśikas*,[6] below whom all the others were known as *rājaputras* [7] It further lays down that the income of the *laghusāmanta* should amount to 5,000, of the *sāmanta* to 10,000 and of the *mahāsāmanta* to 20,000, a scheme also supported by a fourteenth century work on architecture, the *Rājavallabhamandana* [8] The text, however, does not fix the rate of

[1] Ibid
[2] Ed P A Mankad *GOS*, CXV, p XII
[3] 81, 2–10
[4] Ibid
[5] 81 11–12
[6] 71 33–4, 39
[7] Agrawala, *Harsacarita*, op cit, p 178, fn 3
[8] Quoted by Agrawala, p 203

revenue to be collected by those chiefs from their subjects, but it does provide a systematised hierarchy in terms of political and economic power

Early legal and other texts conceive differences in political power, income, houses, resources, etc , in terms of varnas only, but the position changes in the works on architecture Privileges are no longer assigned to the people exclusively according to their hereditary varna On the other hand an attempt is made to reconcile the status based on varna with that based on feudal hierarchy This is noticeable in a few passages on architecture in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varāhamihira and in the *Mayamata* Varāhamihira speaks of the size of the houses of the various categories of ruling chief and also of the four varnas The *Mayamata* lays down that the king of the whole earth should have an eleven-storeyed house, the brāhmanas (*dvijāti*) a nine-storeyed house (*navabhūmiḥ*), the ordinary kings (*nṛpas*) a seven-storeyed house, the vaiśyas and ordinary captains (*yodhaseneśa*) a four-storeyed house, the śūdras a house ranging from one to three storeys, and the *sāmantapramukhas* a five-storeyed house (*pañcabhūmakam*) [1] Here different catagories of kings and *sāmantas* are introduced in the housing scheme more clearly than is done by Varāhamihira The *Aparājitapṛcchā*, however, does not take account of varna in prescribing the size of the house, which is determined by the relative status of the feudal elements It clearly lays down the size of residence of each one of the nine categories of chiefs, including *mahāmandalesvara, māndalika, mahāsāmanta, sāmanta* and *laghusāmanta*, and of some others who are lower in the scale [2] But the use of a *simhadvāra* is permitted only to the *cakravartin, mahāmandaleśvara, mahāsāmanta* and *sāmanta*, and not to those lower in rank [3] According to the *Mānasāra* members of all four castes can become *prahārakas* and *astragrāhins*, the last two categories of rulers, and their privileges vary according to the rank Thus by transcending considerations of varna these texts provide a basis for the emerging social and political organisation which can no longer be ignored

At the end of this chapter we may review the existence in

[1]*Mayamata*, XXIX 80–2, the meaning of '*ṣatatalam mandali-kudva pañcabhūmāvarajate* (ibid , 81) seems to be obscure

[2]81, 2–12

[3]81, 21–4

Northern India of numerous principalities, many of which owed their origin to the widespread practice of land grants or the partition of ancestral dominions among the princes of the ruling family Of course direct records of grants for military and administrative service are not as many as those of grants to priests and temples In fact many records which give a clue to assignments to officials and vassals are actually religious grants made by these dignitaries In India we do not notice any counterpart of the struggle between the Papacy and the State, which characterised the history of mediaeval Europe While in the middle of the ninth century the Carolingians confiscated the property of the Church and granted it to their secular vassals,[1] in India, whatever the complexion and nature of the ruling dynasties, they vied with one another in making religious grants Religious and secular vassals grew at the cost of the regular officials, who themselves acquired a similar status because of their payment in land grants Of course, conditions in Eastern India were different from those in Gujarāt and Rājasthān, where the relation between the lord and his vassal was governed by contracts The comparative absence of secular copper-plate charters under the Pālas and Senas suggests that ordinarily royal servants and feudal lords were not allowed to become powerful enough to claim a lasting basis for their grants, as was the case under the Caulukyas, Paramāras, Cāhamānas, Gāhadavālas, Candellas and the rulers of Orissa

The period also bears witness to the growing practice of earmarking dues for officials in Baghelkhand, Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Rājasthān The custom continued under Muslim rule, for Sher Shah reserved certain dues for the payment of his collectors Finally, by this time the feudal system was so well established that it came to be reflected in the Sanskrit texts, which were slow and conservative in recognising changes that did not fit in with the fourfold social order outlined in the Dharmaśāstras The *Mānasollāsa*, the *Lekhapaddhati* and several texts on art and architecture give a picture of the feudal pyramid which is not found in the earlier works Some texts of the period boldly recommend gifts of land for secular purposes, and others clearly lay down the obligations of the secular beneficiaries All these factors provided a congenial climate for the introduction of the fief system by the Sultans of Delhi

[1]Ganshof, *Feudalism*, pp 35–6

CHAPTER VI

CLIMAX AND CRACKS
(*c* A D 1000–1200)

A thorough regional survey of villages granted to priests, temples, vassals and officials in Northern India can be attempted on the basis of the available land charters in the two centuries preceding the Turkish conquest, but what has been done here is to present a conspectus wide enough to indicate the increasing trend of granting villages throughout the country from Assam in the east to Gujarāt in the west, from the Himalayas in the north to the Vindhyas in the south

It seems that the typical village as an economic unit based on the producing activities of the peasants and artisans did not exist in Assam, for the land grants mostly refer to big plots of land being given away to the brāhmanas in forest and hilly areas intersected by rivers, and hence not conducive to the formation of regular villages Thus a copper-plate of Balavarmma (975) refers to the grants of 4,000 measures of rice,[1] and another copper-plate (of Ratnapāla 1010–50) speaks of a grant of land producing 2000 measures of rice [2] Similarly the Gauhati copper-plate of Indrapāla makes a religious grant of land yielding 4,000 measures of rice [3] These three instances are sufficient to show that plots of land with considerable yield continued to be granted for religious purposes

As we move eastwards into Bengal ruled by the Pālas and Senas, we notice villages, as distinct from areas of land, being transferred to the beneficiaries Of the Pāla rulers of our period Vigrahapāla III granted half a village somewhere in the present Saharsa District to a brāhmana [4] Similarly Madanapāla (1140–55) granted

[1] *JBAS*, LXVI pt I, 291–2
[2] Ibid , LXVII, pt I, 120
[3] Ibid , LXVI, pt I, 130–1, lines 6–9
[4] *EI*, XXIX, 7, ll 24–42

a village in North Bengal to a brāhmana from Campāhitti [1] The process was carried forward by the feudatories of the Pālas Īsvaraghosa, probably a feudatory of Vigrahapāla III, granted a village in South Bengal to a brāhmana from Candavāra [2] In East Bengal a plot of land was granted to a priest from Madhyadeśa by another Pāla feudatory Bhojavarman, some time about the close of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century A D [3]

The Candras, possibly the feudatories of the Pālas in East Bengal, also made several grants Srīcandra allotted by one charter for religious purposes certain plots of land, scattered in five villages in Puṇḍravardhanabhukti,[4] where land continued to be scarce from the Gupta period onwards His grandson Lādahacandra granted two villages along with 11 *pātakas* and several *dronas* of land to the god Lāḍaha-mādhava, who was again granted 17 *pātakas* of land scattered in two places by Viradharadeva in the thirteenth century, probably in the Sylhet District [5] Grant of villages on religious grounds continued under the Senas of Bengal, with the difference that in some cases the annual yield of the village was specified in kind and in cash In one case Laksmanasena granted a village in North Bengal with detached plots in four villages [6] Under Vīsvarūpasena 11 plots of land scattered in six villages, altogether measuring 336½ *unmānas* and yielding a total annual income of 500 *purānas*, were granted to a brāhmana [7] The land charters of the eleventh and twelfth centuries create the impression that grants were mainly confined to what is now known as Bangladesh where it was not possible to make grants on any lavish scale probably on account of scarcity of land

Priests and temples in Bihar did not cease to receive generous gifts of villages, although so far we have not traced any copper-plates of the Karnātas of Mithilā However, we know of the grant of a village made by Samgrāma Gupta some time in the twelfth or

[1] *JBAS*, LXIX, pt I, 66 ff , ll 27–49
[2] *IB*, III 16, ll 21–9
[3] Ibid , pp 23–4, ll 24–51
[4] Ibid , pp, 165–6
[5] The Mainamati copper-plate of Vīradharadeva, formerly in the possession of Professor A H Dani
[6] *EI*, XXVI, 1, ll. 57–9
[7] *IB*, III, no 15, ll 42–68

thirteenth century in south Monghyr About the same time, in the early thirteenth century, the Khayaravālas of Japla in Palamau granted some villages and warned against the enjoyment of villages by the brāhmanas on the strength of forged charters [1] The Khayaravālas were the feudatories of the Gāhadavālas, who held western Bihar for some time and granted a village to a brāhmana in the Maner area in 1134 [2]

In Uttar Pradesh, the heart of their kingdom, the Gāhadavālas made the largest number of grants As shown earlier, a single brāhmana family was granted landed property comprising at least eighteen villages, scattered in eighteen *pattalās*, the total number of the *pattalās* being sixty,[3] mainly for secular services Similarly six fiefs were assigned to a ksatriya *rāuta* (military functionary) and three villages to three other *rāutas* [4]

Besides these secular assignments many villages were granted by the Gāhaḍavālas for religious purposes The largest number of such grants was made by Candradeva, who in 1093 granted one whole *pattalā*[5] to 500 brāhmanas We have no idea of the size of this fiscal unit, but it may have comprised at least 100 villages To the same group of 500 brāhmanas Candradeva in about 1100 granted thirty-two villages, two in the very same *pattalā* which had been previously granted with the exception of those two villages, and 30 in another *pattalā* The motive for the grant of a whole *pattalā* to 500 brāhmanas does not seem to be their settlement in any backward area for its development, for the Kathehali *pattalā*, bounded on three sides by the rivers Gomati, Bhāgirathī and Barnā,[6] lay near Benares, which was one of the two important seats of Gāhadavāla power, the other being Kanauj Probably it was part of a policy to placate the priests who formed an important element in the social order of Uttar Pradesh under the Gāhaḍavālas In any case it is plain that about 130 villages were granted to 500 brāhmanas Groups of villages continued to be

[1] One such forged charter has been discovered and is in the possession of Mr S V Sohoni

[2] *JBORS*, II, 443–4, ll 8–19

[3] Calculated on the basis of Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gahadavāla Dynasty*, Appendix B, numbers 10–13, 15–17, 21, 23, 26, 37, 50, 52–6, 58

[4] Supra, pp 173–4

[5] *EI*, XIV, 15

[6] R Niyogi, op cit, p 187

granted to religious donees in subsequent times Govindacandra regranted six villages to a new set of donees,[1] and Jayaccandra granted two villages [2] Beside these, two or three villages were donated by the princes or queens of the Gāhadavāla family with the royal consent [3] The available records indicate that the Gāhadavālas granted far more villages for religious purposes than for secular, but more relevant to our argument is the fact that, in addition to one whole *pattalā* probably consisting of 100 villages, another 110 villages[4] were held by secular and religious intermediaries as tax-free grants in an area which did not cover the whole of the modern Uttar Pradesh and hardly extended south of the Jamna

The condition in the neighbouring kingdom of the Candellas, which comprised the area south of the Jamna formed by the Bundelkhand region, was not very different Here most grants consisted of single villages, and fifteen villages were granted separately to secular and religious beneficiaries by the Candella rulers [5] If we were to analyse the position only on the basis of these grants it would appear that secular assignees, mostly rewarded for military service, were as important as religious recipients But this can be said only when we leave out of account a record of Paramardin His Semra plates of 1167 grant to 309 brāhmanas villages scattered in four *visayas* [6] Since only eleven places are named, it appears that only eleven villages were granted But if we carefully examine the names, it would appear that some of these stand for groups of villages Thus the Pīlikhinī-pañcela, Itāva-pañcela and Isarahāra-pañcela together represent fifteen and not three villages Similarly Khaṭauda-dvādaśaka and Tāntadvādaśaka together signify twenty-four and not two villages, and lastly Hāt-āstādaśaka indicates eighteen villages and not one The other five place-names, however, stand

[1] *EI*, XI, 3, l 12

[2] *IA*, XVIII, p 131, l 20

[3] P Niyogi, *The Economic History of Northern India*, pp 51–2

[4] Calculated on the basis of land grants of Section II, Group A, in Appendix B in Roma Niyogi, op cit

[5] Calculated on basis of the list of the Candella inscriptions containing the names of villages in S K Mitra *The Early Rulers of Khajurāho*, Appendix I, We have, however, added the fifteenth village on the basis of the Tehri Plates of Trailokyavarman

[6] *EI*, IV, 20

for single villages The total number of villages donated by this record of Paramardin would come to sixty-two, which is not a high figure considering 309 beneficiaries to whom the villages were donated The grant, however, excluded the town of Madanapura and two villages and four ploughs of land attached to the town, which again confirms our hypothesis that most place-names signified groups of villages rather than single villages Besides this, we also hear of various other grants of plots of land to priests and others What is more important is that this as well as other records mention the *bhattāgrahāras*, villages granted for religious and educational purposes, from where the brāhmanas emigrated to new areas Even if we leave out such villages, the number of the other villages granted by the Candellas would rise in all to nearly eighty, which is not a negligible figure in relation to the cultivable area (of 8000 sq miles) in the Bundelkhand region

The Caulukyas of Gujarāt also have many grants to their credit Most epigraphic grants made to religious donees, priests and temples, both Jain and brāhmanical, consisted of single villages, although their total would reach well above two dozen [1] But the *Prabandhacintāmani*, a semi-historical, literary account, records that in Vālākadeśa, Siddharāja established Simhapura, an *agrahāra* of the brāhmanas, the jurisdiction of which extended over 106 villages The Caulukyas built numerous temples, many of which had to be maintained out of the endowments of villages Thus Kumārapāla built as many as 1440 Jain temples, probably one temple in every village [2] We have no idea of the number of villages with which these temples were endowed, but the Muslim historians provide astounding figures of the villages owned by the famous temple of Somnāth It is stated that the temple had 10,000 cultivated villages under its direct control [3] This may sound exaggerated, but the statement that 'the different princes of Hindustan had bestowed in all two thousand villages' is not beside the mark At any rate it is clear that no other single religious institution owned so many villages, Nālandā having only 200

[1] *IA*, VI, pp 191, 193, 199, XVIII, p 108, XI, p 337, etc

[2] A K Manjumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, pp 318–9 Siddharāja donated many villages under Simhapura Ibid , p 211

[3] Elliot and Dawson, IV, 18

villages, the highest number on record, if we exclude Somnāth

The Caulukyas seem to have granted as many villages to vassals and officials as to religious donees Even a unit of 126 villages seems to have been assigned to the king for his enjoyment as a member of the royal family [1] Vassals and high officers were enfeoffed with large territories, and in 1209 we hear of one entire *pattalā* granted to a high functionary, who seems to have received the whole of Saurāṣṭra-*mandala* as fief from Bhīmadeva [2] The *Prabandhacintāmani* informs us that Kumārapāla granted Āliga, the potter, Citrakūta *pattikā* containing 700 villages [3] This may be an exaggeration, so also may be the tradition recorded in the *Rāsamālā* that a large number of northern brāhmanas (*audīcyas*) was invited by Mūlarāja to Gujarāt, where they were granted numerous villages, for the epigraphic evidence so far is not encouraging [4] But the tradition that Mūlarāja presented to brāhmanas the beautiful and prosperous town of Siṃhapura and small villages to numerous brāhmanas near Siddhapura and Sihora [5] cannot altogether be discarded Brāhmanas were mainly brought from Kanauj and Ujjain to Gujarāt, where they became the founders or heads of the *mathas* [6] In Gujarāt more grants were made to temples than to brāhmanas who acted as their priests or trustees [7] On the whole epigraphic and literary records of land grants are sufficient indication of the considerable extent of land held by religious and especially by secular beneficiaries under the Caulukyas of Gujarāt

We can also get some idea of the extent of the donated land in Baghelkhand, held by the various branches of the Kalacuris from the middle of the tenth to the end of the twelfth century Here villages were mostly granted to brāhmanas, presumably because of the need of having their support in maintaining control over a backward area Most donations consisted of single villages.[8] Thus

[1] *EI*, I 36, ll 3–4 The term *svabhujyamāna* used here may mean that the territory was directly enjoyed by the king

[2] *IA*, XVIII, 113, ll 19–23

[3] Merutuṅgācārya's *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, ed Jinavijaya Muni, p 80

[4] H D Sankalia, *Archaeology of Gujarāt*, p 208

[5] Forbes, *Rāsamālā*, pp 64–5 quoted in Lakshmishankar Vyas, *Caulukya Kumārapāla* (in Hindi), p 177

[6] Sankalia, op cit, p 206

[7] Ibid

[8] *CII*, IV, 63, ll 19–25, verses 29–30

a donee from Vaiśālī was granted a village by Karna (1041–73) [1] But one inscription records the grant of five villages by the king and members of the royal family to eight brāhmanas, probably associated with the temple of Visnu in a city [2] An inscription of Yuvarājadeva II informs us that his favourite wife Nohālā granted two villages to a Śaiva ascetic and seven to the god Śiva [3] Another grant of his comprised probably twenty-three, certainly sixteen villages [4] Land was also granted by the Saryupāra Gorakhpur branch of the Kalacuris, and the grant made by Sodhadeva (1135) to fourteen brāhmaṇas shows that the gift land measuring twenty *nālus* was situated in six villages [5] The charters of the Kalacuris of Tripurī and Ratanpur and of their feudatories show that altogether sixty-five villages were granted by them for religious purpose, although the number does not seem to have been as great as under the Candellas If, however, we place reliance upon a tradition recorded in an inscription, it would appear that a major part of the Kalacuri kingdom of Tripurī was given as a grant to a monastic establishment According to it Sadbhāvasambhu of the Golakī *matha* received a gift of three lakhs of villages from the Kalacuri king Yuvarāja I This would account for one-third of the total revenue of his home province of Dāhala, which, according to tradition, comprised nine lakhs of villages.[6] This may not be literally true for the number of villages would not be as many as the tradition records, but without doubt the Kalacuris liberally patronised the *mathas*,[7] especially the Śaiva ones, which emerged as intermediaries in land under the Kalacuris, similar to the Buddhist monasteries under Harsa and the Pālas

Mālwa, the western part of Central India held by the Paramāras in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, presented a somewhat different picture Here the scions of the royal family, vassals, and officials seem to have occupied a considerable portion of land We

[1]Ibid 248, ll 32–41

[2]Ibid , 42, verses 30–42

[3]Ibid , 45, verses 43–5

[4]Ibid , 46, verses 36–42

[5]Ibid , 74, verse 30, ll 32–59 It has been argued that six place names mentioned in the record may be taken as six quarters of the same village (P Niyogi, op cit , p 16), but these seem to refer to six villages

[6]Mirashi, *CII*, IV, p CLVIII

[7]Ibid

get the general impression that the major part of the donated land was managed by them, rather than by the priests and temples In the outlying areas of the Paramāra kingdom a feudatory seems to have held as many as 1500 villages as reward for his services The main reason which led to the division of Mālwa and the neighbouring areas into so many fiefs or personal estates was the tradition of equality among the members of the ruling clan who founded nearly half a dozen branches of the dynasty Perhaps the major part of the Paramāra dominions was divided into fiefs Villages granted for religious purposes seem to have been fewer and were mostly donated singly [1] In addition to these, plots of land were also granted for this purpose [2]

The inscriptions of the Cāhamānas illustrate more clearly the parcelling out of villages among the scions of the royal family In their territories in Rājasthān the number of villages held by the temples[3] and brāhmanas seems to be limited and certainly less than those held by the kinsmen of the royal family, other vassals and officials, who of course made occasional grants of villages for religious purposes

Land was also granted for religious purposes, sometimes as *agrahāras*, in the hill-state of Chambā in the latter half of the tenth century and in the eleventh century [4] But here we do not hear of grants of villages, perhaps on account of the scarcity of arable land only plots of land were granted Land grants were also enjoyed by secular assignees,[5] although it is difficult to get even a very rough indication of the extent of land held as gifts or fiefs

Whether through the fact that more land charters have survived from this period or whether because of the rise of more dynasties, undoubtedly in the two centuries preceding the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate far more grants of villages in Northern India are recorded than during nearly three centuries of the Pāla and Pratīhāra rule down to A D 1000 Numerous villages were granted in Uttar Pradesh and Central India, which never witnessed so many gifts of villages under the Pratīhāras

[1] *EI*, XIX, 39, Grant A, *IA*, VI, pp 52–3 ll 7–24, *EI*, VIII, 21, p 206, IX, 13, B
[2] *EI*, XI, 18, ll 7–18
[3] A Copper-plate Grant of Alhana s reign V 1205 , Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhān Dynasties*, pp 181–2, ll 13–14
[4] *ASR*, 1902–3, pp 252–3, ll 11–25, pp 260–1, ll 15–32
[5] Ibid

Indeed, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries the practice of making land grants became almost universal throughout the whole of Northern India The records of Mālwa, Gujarāt and Rājasthān give the impression that the major portion of land in these areas was held as fiefs by kinsmen, vassals and officials, who were probably assigned more villages than priests and temples But in Uttar Pradesh and Central India more villages were held by priests than by secular assignees The data from Bihar, Bengal and Assam are too slender to hazard any generalisation, although it is fair to assume that monastic establishments of the type of Nālandā, which had been granted 200 villages, continued to flourish till the advent of the Muslim conquerors is this area

A statistical account of the villages held in religious grants or secular assignments is impossible, it is not possible even in the case of European countries which are more fortunate in the possession of records In Northern India even if all gift villages mentioned in inscriptions are totalled up, it will not be possible to determine their ratio to the total number of villages, for the total number is not known Nevertheless the land charters of the period provide unmistakable evidence of the widespread practice of religious and secular grants of villages, for which several officers known as *mahāsāndhivigrahika, mahākṣapatalika* and *dharmalekhi* were especially maintained in various kingdoms of Northern India All this meant an increase in the number of intermediaries of different grades in land, which may be regarded as a significant feature of the economy of the period

An important practice under the Pālas and Pratihāras[1] which enabled the beneficiaries to increase their personal demesne but at the same time to extend the cultivable area at the cost of forest or barren land surrounding the donated village was to leave the boundaries of the gift villages undefined So far as Eastern Bihar and Bengal are concerned it seems that the practice continued in the eleventh and twelfth centuries under Mahipāla I (988–1038),[2] Vigrahapāla III[3] and Madanapāla (1140–55) [4] The charters of

[1]Some Pāla and Rastrakūta charters, however, clearly demarcate the donated villages by mentioning their surroundings

[2]*EI*, XXIX, I, B, l 41 This charter known as the Belwa copper-plate was, however, issued in about A D 993

[3]Ibid , 7, l 32

[4]*JBAS*, LXIX, pt I 66 ff , l 39

these rulers grant the villages with their boundaries up to their pasture grounds and shrubs[1] The custom of not specifying the boundaries was also followed by the Varmans[2] and some other feudatories[3] of the Pālas in East Bengal Even much later the practice was continued by the Sena chiefs of Pīṭhi near Gaya[4] and by Saṃgrāma Gupta, a ruler in south Monghyr some time in the late twelfth or the thirteenth century[5] Although the term used in his charter was the four boundaries defined (*catuh-sīmāvacchinaḥ*)[6] actually these were not stated

But the Senas, who supplanted the Varmans in East Bengal and occupied a major part of the Pāla kingdom in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, always took care to define the boundaries of villages and plots of land granted by them[7] The same practice was followed by the Candras, probably the contemporaries of the Senas in Bangladesh The Mainamati copper-plates of Lādahacandra clearly specify the limits of the villages granted[8] The fact that boundaries were defined and the areas and income specified would suggest that the progressive possibility of grants in opening new land to cultivation was exhausted But this could hardly apply to contemporary Assam, where the limits of the plots of land and the yields from them were clearly mentioned[9] Perhaps limits were specified in Assam because not villages but plots of land were given in donation Whatever might be the reason the specification of boundaries circumscribed the area to which the donees could extend his jurisdiction

In contrast to Bangladesh under the Candras and Senas, the villages granted by the Gāhaḍavālas and their feudatories in Uttar Pradesh generally did not have their boundaries defined[10] The usual phrase used in this connection was 'the village up to its

[1]Sometimes the term *yūti* is replaced by *pūti*
[2]*IB*, III, pp 23–4, ll 37–41
[3]*JBORS*, IV, 280, verses 2–3
[4]Ibid , pp 156–7, ll 21–32
[5]*JBORS*, V, 593–4, l 10
[6]Ibid
[7]*IB*, III, p 78, ll 37–54, pp 114–5, ll 39–51, pp 129–31, ll 46–50
[8]Copper-plate 1, ll 6–11, plate 2, ll 8–11 Reading obtained from Professor A H Dani
[9]*JBAS*, LXVI, pt 1, pp 295–7, ibid , LXVII, pt, 1, p 120, ibid , LXVI, pt 1, pp 130–1
[10]*IA*, XVIII, 11, 16, 131, 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, 143

boundaries', defined as to its four abuttals (*catur-āghāta-viśuddhah*) [1] But actually only the Basahi grant of Govindacandra defines the boundaries on all sides of a village given in grant [2] Since most Gāhadavāla land grants seem to have been made in developed areas, it is strange that the boundaries are not mentioned, perhaps these were taken for granted But even then lack of specification may have given the beneficiary a free hand in extending his personal property

But in the Kalacuri dominion of Baghelkhand the village granted was never defined Of sixty-five villages recorded as grants in the charters of the Kalacuris of Tripurī and Ratanpur and their feudatories,[3] none has its boundaries demarcated Many gift villages are just named and no details whatsoever furnished, particularly in the grants made by the feudatories All this seems to be understandable in view of the emigration of the brāhmanas from outside,[4] mainly from Uttar Pradesh, to Central India, which may have helped the growth of agriculture through the introduction of new methods but hindered the development of the proprietory rights of the peasants in the donated villages

What prevailed in the eastern part of Central India also obtained in its western part in Mālwa, where the grants of the Paramāras generally do not mention the boundaries of the villages given In one case it is stated that the village extended up to a kos,[5] but in other cases even this is not stated [6] However they use the phrase *sva-sīmā-trna-yūti-gocara-paryanta* (extending up to its boundaries, grassy land and pasture grounds), which is so common in Pāla and other land charters It seems that in Mālwa there was still some scope for bringing virgin land under cultivation, because brāhmanas from a large number of places

[1]Ibid

[2]*IA*, XIV, 103

[3]*CII*, IV, 42, verses 30–42, 45, verses 43–5, 46, verses 35–42, 48, ll 36–40, 50, ll 38–48, 56, l 28 60, verses 29–30, 63, l 27, 65, ll 11–12, 68, ll 7–10, 70, l 13, 75, ll 8–11, 77, verse 33, 82, ll 18–20, 83, verse 20, 86, verse 16, 88, verse 23, 89, verse 16, 91, verses 15–16, 94, verse 15, 96, verse 39, 97, verse 13, 98, verse 42, 99, verse 18, 101, verse 19 102 verse 19, 117, ll 8–10 123, verse 15, *CII*, IV, 652

[4]Mirashi *CII*, IV, p CIXVI

[5]*IA*, VI, pp 52–3, ll 7–24

[6]Ibid , XIV, p 160, ll 9–17, *Proceedings of (later All-India) Oriental Conference*, I, 325–6

outside Mālwa were invited to settle in the land [1] But it is likely that many of these were brought rather to lend support to the Paramāras than to bring virgin soil under cultivation

Many Candella grants also do not define the boundaries of the villages given This is specially true of grants made before the twelfth century,[2] although some later grants retain this form [3] The usual phrase used in the Candella grants is the same as in those of the Gāhadavālas, namely 'the boundaries defined up to its (of the village) four abuttals' A charter of Parmardin (1167) refers to the grant of probably sixty-two and certainly eleven villages, but does not specify their boundaries [4] The boundaries and the yield are, however, mentioned in the grant of a plot of land made by Madanavarman in 1134 [5] The boundaries and measurements of the donated land are also provided by the Mahoba plate of Paramardin 1173 Thus it would appear that the Candellas preferred to define the boundaries if the object of grant was a plot of land but did not do so if it was a village By and large the Candella grants opened up avenues for the expansion of the donees in the neighbourhood of the donated villages

The conditions seem to have been entirely different in Gujarāt, where the Caulukyas ruled Perhaps the practice of not defining the boundaries of the village given in grant was followed in the last quarter of the tenth century in the reign of Mūlarāja [6] The limits of a village granted by a Cāhamāna feudatory of Ajayapāla in 1175 for feeding fifty brāhmanas were not defined [7] But the boundaries of a village granted by Bhīmadeva I,[8] and of plots of land granted by Bhīmadeva II[9] and by some subordinate authority under him were demarcated[10] Most of these grants, however, belong to the thirteenth century Thus we get the impression that

[1] D C Ganguly, *History of the Paramāra Dynasty*, p 240

[2] *IA*, XVI, 204, ll 6–11, ibid , 206–7, ll 6–15

[3] *EI*, XVI, 20, I, ll 7–14, *IA*, XVI, pp 209–10, ll 5–7, 15–17, *EI*, XXXII, 119–20, XXXI, 11, ll, 12–18

[4] *EI* , IV, 20, ll 6–17

[5] *IA*, XVI, pp 209–10, ll 5–7

[6] *IA*, VI, pp 192–3, pl I, ll 6–11

[7] *IA*, XVIII, p 83, ll 18–21

[8] Bhadresvar inscription of Bhimadeva I, ll 3–5, on the basis of a copy deciphered by Professor J de Casparis, who kindly passed it on to me

[9] *IA*, XVIII, p 110, ll 7–12

[10] Ibid , p 113, ll 26–42

in Gujarāt, in the late twelfth and in the thirteenth centuries, boundaries of the gift villages were recorded, a practice which seems to be in keeping with the developed economy of that region But generally the grants of the eleventh and twelfth centuries show that the boundaries of the villages were left undefined so that the donees could take advantage of the confusion to add to their landed property by appropriating the neighbouring land

The land grants of eleventh and twelfth centuries further helped the appropriation of land and its resources by individual donees Some early Pāla charters sought the formal consent of the vassals, officials and the village community in making grants of villages But even this formality was given up in later Pāla charters Instead of giving their consent they were now just informed,[1] although the old form was followed in the charters of the Candras of Bangladesh[2] and in a thirteenth century copper-plate from south Monghyr[3] The princes of Uttar Pradesh, Central India, and Gujarāt, however, never cared to pay even formal attention to the wishes of the villagers, whose headmen and leading inhabitants, and occasionally whose cultivators, were informed of the grant, but never asked to give their formal consent to it This gives us some indication of the weakening of the rights of the village population over the resources belonging to the village

In transferring agrarian rights to the beneficiaries the land charters of the period follow the pattern set by the Pāla and Pratihāra land grants, but they enlarge the scope of the concessions, practically embracing all the resources belonging to the village Of course pasture ground, grassy land beyond it, mango and *mahuā* trees, reservoirs of water, bushes and thickets, forests, barren land, low land, fertile land, land under occasional flood, etc , all continued to be transferred to the donee as in earlier times But some new items, differing according to the geography of the area, were added Thus the charters from Bangladesh

[1]The phrase used was *viditam-astu* in place of *matam-astu*, EI, XXIX, 7, l 31, *JBAS*, LXIX, pt I, p 66 ff , l 39

[2]Two Mainamati copper-plates of Ladahacandradeva formerly in possession of Professor A H Dani

[3]*JBORS* V, 593–4, l 9

almost invariably donated betelnut and coconut,[1] rarely mentioned in earlier charters, trees must have now constituted an important source of income in cash to those who grew them Further, sometimes the village was now transferred along with salt (*sa-lavana*),[2] mentioned as salt mine (*sa-loha-lavan-ākarah*) in some grants from Bihar[3] and Uttar Pradesh[4] and Baghelkhand How the surrender of these resources to the recipients affected the villagers in Bangladesh cannot be said, but it indicates the more complete control of the beneficiaries over the varied produces of the village

Curiously enough the grants from Bengal do not transfer fishing rights unless they are covered by the donee's rights to tanks and other reservoirs of water Was this a concession to the universal taste of the people of that area for eating fish? But the Gāhadavāla grants specifically transfer the government rights to fisheries (*matsy-ākarah*) [5] It is obvious that unlike the transfer of iron and salt mines,[6] which would not be found in every village, that of rights to fisheries would affect the inhabitants of many villages, who were not free to carry on fishing because of the presence of the grantees

The Candella charters present the most elaborate list of the village and its products made over to the donees In addition to various kinds of trees and mines they mention the transfer of *kusuma* (flowers producing saffron), sugarcane, cotton and *sana* (hemp) plants [7] Some lists mention even animals such as deer, and birds and aquatic animals,[8] which would naturally affect the villagers' rights to hunt and fish freely Similarly in some Sena grants, and generally in the Candella charters,[9] temples were also transferred to the recipients Such temples may have been constructed by the communal efforts of the villagers who undoubtedly used them for communal purposes, but once allotted to the donees the threat to the communal use of the

[1] *IB*, III, pp 23–4, ll 37–41, pp 114–5, ll 39–51, pp 129–31, ll 50–3
[2] *IB*, III, pp 23–4, ll 37–41
[3] *JBORS*, V, 593–4, ll 10–11
[4] *EI*, IX, 47, ll 7–14
[5] *JBORS*, II, 443–9, l 14
[6] Ibid
[7] *EI*, XX, 14, ll 17–20
[8] *EI*, XVI, 2, l 26
[9] Ibid , l 25 (the term used is *sa-mandira-prakāra*)

temple could not be ignored Especially the brāhmana donees would find it difficult to resist the temptation to monopolise the offerings and endowments made to the deities

The various kinds of resources made over to the donees included mines and deposits These obviously were claimed by the king on account of his sovereign rights, but such rights could not be as effective under the royal agents as under the donees, who would have the advantage of being on the spot The transfer of hills, rivers, forest, etc , would have the effect of creating individual rights of the donees in all the conceivable resources of the soil Commercial crops were taxed in the Candella dominions, and irrigation facilities may have brought taxes in the Paramāra kingdom where the grant of ponds, wells and lakes (*vāpi-kūpa-taḍāga*) along with the village points to this possibility Irrigation cess was as old as the days of Kautilya, but now it seems to have been transferred to the donees The gift of hills, salt and iron, may have been inserted in several charters as a matter of form, for these surely did not exist in every donated village or piece of land But where the gift land contained these appendages, the donee's rights may have been effective This would imply that those who quarried stone out of the hill or dug earth for building from the common land had to pay something What else could be the reason for explicitly mentioning the alienation of these assets in favour of the grantees?

No ruler had set up any inspectorate to see that the donees did not exceed the economic rights and privileges conceded to them, with the result that peasants were completely thrown at the mercy of the donees, secular or religious Perhaps they fared worse under secular grantees, who had to meet certain obligations out of the villages granted to them But in every case the peasant was not so much of a free, sturdy peasant-proprietor as a semi-serf ministering to the needs of the grantees

As shown earlier, the detailed enumeration of the resources of a donated village implies not merely the right to enjoy income from them but also the right to own them It has been argued that the Kalacuri grants transferred to the donees[1] not the rights of ownership but only the royal prerogative of demanding land revenue and other dues in kind and cash This may be true of those grants which only mention the name of the village and its

[1]Mirashi, *CII*, IV, p CLXXI

revenues, but not of those which catalogue its resources with meticulous care A shorter list of village resources is generally furnished by the Paramāra grants,[1] which mention the pasture ground and the grassy land beyond it, and by the Caulukya land grants which mention only the rows of tree,[2] the Cāhamāna grants provide the shortest list, for they merely name the village to be granted [3] Hence in Rājasthān, Mālwa and Gujarāt the grantees were not given complete rights in the ground But this cannot be said in general of the grants made by the Gāhaḍavālas and particularly the Candellas

It has been further held that the transfer of the village resources did not affect the rights of the village folk, who continued to use the water reservoirs, tanks, common pasture, etc , in common [4] But once these rights were made over to the beneficiaries it is difficult to see how long they would respect the customary rights of the village folk As pointed out earlier, the constant presence of the donees in the village would certainly tend to undermine the common rights of the villagers than would the occasional visit of the royal agents

Subinfeudation, in its broad general sense of beneficiaries themselves making land grants, not only continued but also increased during this period [5] It has been shown elsewhere how members of the ruling clan, vassals and officials made grants out of their own assignments to priests and temples, sometimes with and sometimes without the permission of the king,[6] and here sometimes they prevailed upon their sovereign to endow the temples erected by them with villages Occasionally they also used their power and prestige to persuade the local merchants to patronise the shrines set up by themselves It is true that religious grants did not involve any economic obligations towards the donors who certainly could claim the good wishes and moral support of the beneficiaries, but they did give rise to several

[1] *IA*, XIV, p 160, l 13
[2] Ibid , XVIII, p 83, l 19
[3] *EI*, II, 8, verses 48–9, 'A copper-plate grant of Alhana's reign' in Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhān Dynasties*, p 182
[4] Mirashi, *CII*, IV, pp CLXXI-II
[5] *EI*, II 8 verses 49
[6] Ibid Some instances of grants made by *sāmanta*, *mahāsāmanta* and similar dignitaries have been collected by P Niyogi op cit , pp 54–6

grades of rights in the soil, the assignee owing it to the royal favour, the religious beneficiary owing it to the assignee's favour, and the peasant owing it to the favour of both Even where such wide powers were not conceded, as in the case of the Kalacuris, religious bodies (*mathas*) and groups of brāhmaṇas owning as many as twenty-three villages could not manage them without employing intermediaries who had to be paid by means of land grants or grants of revenues

This brings us to the question of service grants, the paying of even minor services by grants of land The practice was as old as Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*, which provides for the granting of land to various village functionaries in new settlements Widely prevalent in feudal Europe, the practice seems to have been also current in certain parts of Northern India Thus in Orissa under the Gangas coppersmiths, braziers, and betel-sellers were attached to the temple as a part of the grant, and at least some of them were assigned plots of land for their maintenance [1] Although no epigraphic instances are found in Bengal, Bihar, U P and Central India, the practice seems to have been well-established in the hill-state of Chambā, where an eleventh century grant shows that various plots of land, previously granted to the cook, the local elders (*gosthika*), the watchmen (*astaprahārikas*) and some minor officials, apparently for their services, were made over to the temple [2] A certain portion of this land was expressly earmarked for the service of the watchmen (*astaprahārikas*) in that temple [3] Such plots were stipendiary tenements given to temple-servants If this practice was followed in paying temple services, there could hardly be another practice followed in the payment of minor services rendered to the king and smaller *rankılas* (feudal lords)

Some examples of the prevalence of this practice are found in Rajasthān The earliest evidence comes from a land grant of 813 made to two temples in Udaipur [4] It speaks of some fields granted by Vaidya Gīyaka of a kāyastha family, whose members seem to have served a Guhilot chief as scribes and physicians,[5] in consideration of which probably they had received some land The

[1] *JASB*, LXV, pt I, pp 254–6 ll 1–21
[2] *ASR*, 1902–3, pp 262–4, ll 11–32
[3] Ibid, ll 28–31
[4] *EI*, XX, p 123
[5] Ibid

practice also obtained under the Cāhamānas of Naḍol, as can be inferred from an inscription of 1141[1] According to this sixteen brāhmaṇas, two from each of the eight wards into which the town of Dhālepa was divided, were held responsible for the maintenance of security in the town[2] If they did not help in tracing out thieves and yet asked for means of subsistence they were to be punished[3] Apparently the brāhmaṇas were maintained by means of land grants for which they had to render secular services

Some indication of service grants is also given by a Caulukya inscription from Gujarāt A subordinate functionary, probably a bania, under Bhīmadeva II, constructed an irrigation-well and a watering trough attached to it, and for their upkeep he granted certain plots of land to a man of the Prāgvata clan, probably a merchant[4] It is fair to assume that other similar grants may have been made in Gujarāt We have no idea of the extent of subinfeudation caused by such service grants, but wherever they prevailed they must have depressed the position of the peasants

A few epigraphic records of the earlier period mention the transfer of peasants and artisans along with the donated piece of land or village But by the beginning of the eleventh century, when the *Agni Purāṇa*[5] was finally compiled, it seems to have been a well-established practice For this *Purāṇa* recommends that villages with agricultural peasants (*khetaka*) should be transferred to the brāhmaṇas[6] It also advises that temples and *maṭhas* should be provided with lands and slaves[7] and given facilities for dance and music, which would imply the gift of dancers and musicians More references of the type occur in the records of this period Thus the land grants of Assam transfer houses,[8] which clearly imply the transfer of peasants attached to the plots of land A typical illustration is a mid-eleventh century grant from the Sylhet District, according to which the god Śiva received from King Govinda-

[1] *EI* XI, 4, IX
[2] Ibid
[3] Ibid, pp 38–9
[4] *IA*, XVIII, p 113, ll 25–45
[5] The date has been assigned to this text by B B Misra in Ch II of his book, *Polity in the Agni Purāṇa*
[6] 211, 34, 213, 9
[7] 211, 72, 222, 13–14
[8] *JASB*—LXVI, pt I, pp 295–6, cf *JASB*, IX (1840), 766f, verse 24

Keśavadeva 375 *halas* of land with 296 houses, scattered in different villages [1] The householders so transferred included not only peasants but also cowherds and craftsmen The god was also endowed with many attendants such as bell-metal workers, washermen, boatmen and shopkeepers, who inhabited the soil made over to him [2]

Epigraphic records from Bengal do not refer to the transfer of peasants to the donees down to the end of the twelfth century But later the practice spread to this part of the country as well The Sena grants mention the names of peasants cultivating the plots granted for religious purpose The copper-plates from the Tippera District, of about 1234, mention the gift of twelve houses in a village granted to twenty brāhmanas [3] The term *grha-ti* used in this connection has been interpreted variously [4] In our opinion *ti* stands for *tilā*, still used in Bengal and Bihar for natural or artificial elevations made of earth In Bangladesh, where the grant was made, the cultivating caste of Kaivarttas and others still live in houses built on raised platforms, with the object of checking the entry of water The transfer of twelve houses therefore suggests the making over of peasants or agricultural labourers along with the ground on which they worked Several examples are found in the earlier period in Orissa, where for about a hundred years from the middle of the ninth century weavers, brewers cowherds and other villagers covered by the term *prakrti* were made over to the donees [5] In our period the practice seems to have been widespread in the Candella dominions in Bundelkhand Here peasants, artisans and traders were specifically transferred to the donees along with the village [6] The custom also prevailed on a considerable scale in the Cāhamāna dominions, though in a slightly different form According to the charter of Prince Sāhanapāladeva of Nadol in 1135 Sohiya and Asāra, living in the village Nandāna, were transferred to the god

[1] *EI*, XIV, 49, ll 29–51

[2] Ibid

[3] *EI*, XXX, 10 (Mehar Plates of Dāmodaradeva), ll 17–32, and pp 57–8

[4] Ibid, XXVII, 188, fn 6, XXX, 56

[5] See Appendix I

[6] *sa-kāru-karṣaka-vaṇig-vāstavyam* *EI*, XX, 14, B plates, l 19 The editor of this inscription, Hiralal, reads *karsaka* as *kapanka*, and wrongly translates the phrase as together with potter's mud and what has been left by merchants, ibid, 131 fn I, see also *EI*, XXXII, 14, charter I, l 31

Tripurusadeva, along with their sons, grandsons, etc , in perpetuity[1] To the same god were surrendered by King Ālhanadeva in 1148 two other peasants of the same village, Umaponanāla and Mahasasīha [2] It is not clear whether in the two cases the village in question was also granted to the god But the persons who were allotted to the god were certainly peasants (*kutumbikas*),[3] and the object for which they were transferred could have been no other than the cultivation of land belonging to the god They have been therefore compared to Russian serfs [4] A Caulukya grant of 1207 informs us that the Mehar king Jagamalla, a feudatory of the Caulukyas, donated to two lingas, established by him in the large town of Talājhā, two pieces of land in the neighbouring two villages, and for their cultivation he named three peasants in the grant [5] The other area where this type of serfdom is attested was Chambā, where cultivators given away along with plots of land are named in a grant [6]

Although the present survey leaves Peninsular India out of account, it seems that the practice was not absent in Mahārāstra A Yādava record of 1279 informs that an *agrahāra* was granted along with artisans, etc [7] The term *kārukādi*[8] obviously covered peasants In Konkan artisans were objects of religious donations The Khārepātan plates of the *māndalika* Rattarāja issued in 1008 allotted to the teachers of the Mattamayūra line not only three villages but also families of women attendants, a family of oilmen, a family of gardeners, a family of potters, and a family of washermen [9] Obviously the services of these attendants and craftsmen were thought indispensable to the ascetics and the others attached to them Though limited to artisans it is a clear instance of serfdom

Later grants from Orissa show the extension of serfdom from the rural to the urban area Thus the second grant in the Nagarī plates of Anangabhīma III, issued in 1230, shows that a township

[1] Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhān Dynasties* Appendix G, III, ll 20–1
[2] Ibid , ll 22–3
[3] Ibid , ll 20–2
[4] Ibid , p 299
[5] *IA*, XI, 337–40
[6] *ASR*, 1902–3, pp 252–3, ll 16–25
[7] M G Dikshit (ed), *Selected Inscriptions from Maharashtra*, p 99
[8] Ibid
[9] *EI*, III, 40, ll 58–9

was granted to a brāhmana along with its residents (*pura-jana-sameta*)[1] The town contained four houses resembling royal residences, but what is more important it contained thirty other houses inhabited by shopkeepers, perfumers, dealers in conchshells, sawyers, goldsmiths, braziers, all of whom are named in the grant[2] The grant also transferred betel-sellers, garland makers, dealers in sugar, milkmen, weavers, oilmen, potters, and Kaivarttas, who all again are named therein[3] Further, a barber, some craftsmen and washermen were also made over This therefore is a striking indication of the projection of the stagnant rural economy into the towns It shows how small traders and artisans had no option but to remain yoked to the closed economy of the town irrespective of its owner They did not enjoy mobility even in towns where they had to work under the same conditions as peasants on donated lands in vilages

The nature of mediaeval economy left little scope for the mobility of artisans, and even less that of peasants Even in villages whose peasants and artisans were not specifically transferred, probably the beneficiary enjoyed a general control over the villagers who were expressly asked to carry out his orders and to pay him all dues Apparently the grants implied the transfer of the people living in the villages In that case why did some charters specifically mention the transfer of artisans and peasants? In the outlying areas of Assam, Orissa and Chambā the position can be explained by the fact that extra caution and coercion had to be exercised in running the local economy of these backward areas which did not attract settlers from outside In Bundelkhand also it was necessary to follow the same policy in its backward regions The obvious object of such a policy was to retain the services of artisans and peasants, and sometimes even of merchants, in those areas where the supply of labour was scarce and land for settlement abundant But this could not be done without introducing full-fledged serfdom in the donated areas

From what has been stated above it will appear that some of the well-known feudal usages such as subinfeudation and service tenures existed in the donated villages and worsened the position of the peasants Even in the area under direct royal control then

[1]*EI*, XXVIII, 40, ll 127–9
[2]Ibid, ll 127–31
[3]Ibid, ll 132–4

position was not much better The enumeration of taxes in the Gāhaḍavāla charters[1] shows that peasants in U P had to pay far more numerous taxes under the Gāhaḍavālas than under any other previous dynasty The Gāhaḍavāla records mention as many as eleven taxes levied from the villagers If all these taxes were collected one wonders what proportion of the produce was left with the peasant to support his family An inscription of the Kalacuris of Tripuri dated 1167 enumerates as many as eleven taxes in addition to certain other unspecified taxes levied or to be levied [2] The same number of taxes is catalogued in a Kalacuri grant of 1180–81,[3] which certainly included the usual *bhāga* and *bhoga*, for before the term *pravani* six syllables in the inscription are completely effaced [4] This would raise the number of taxes to thirteen Although the Kalacuri grants, generally specifically mention three or four taxes (*bhāga-bhoga-hirany-ādi-samasta-rāja-praty-ādyah*),[5] the use of the last term 'all royal dues' seems to cover other taxes which are not specified The utmost we can say is that all these taxes may not have been imposed on the same person, traders and craftsmen paying taxes different from those paid by the peasants In all likelihood peasants would be subjected to most taxes enumerated above Whether the donee could impose fresh taxes on the villagers placed under his charge is not quite clear although the taxes to be imposed on the villages in future (*kariṣyamāna*) were sometimes transferred to him In such villages the peasants were always faced with the possibility of increase in taxes at the hands of the rulers who obviously did not feel circumscribed by custom

A factor which added to the burden of the peasants in Eastern India during this period was the specification of the yield from the various plots of land payable to the state The earlier system was based on the principle of sharecropping, according to which a part of the produce of the peasants went to the government As

[1] All these taxes have been listed in Roma Niyogi, *History of the Gāhadavālas*, pp 167–90, but some terms used for taxes are still inexplicable

[2] *CII*, IV, 63, ll, 29–30 Some terms are obscure, but the list of taxes is formidable *bhāga-kara-pravaṇi-vāḍa-cari - rasavati-kamata-viseṇimādaya-pattakiladaya-duḥsādhyādāya (vai) sayikādāy-ādi-krta-karisaymān-adāyaih saha*

[3] Ibid , Appendix, no 4

[4] Ibid , 649, fn 14

[5] *CII*, IV, 50, ll 43–4

feudalism developed not only the state shared crops with the tenants, but also the tenants shared crops with the sub-tenants, giving rise to a hierarchy of sharecropping But as the system of measurement spread widely and the yield came to be fixed meticulously, the interests of the peasants suffered For measurement and stipulation of the quanitity of the produce did not take into account natural calamities, which were almost beyond human control in earlier times The new assessment assured more surplus to the state than the sharecropping system Perhaps the state made remissions in abnormal circumstances, but we do not know whether the grantees could afford to be generous

In the Kalacuri, Candella and Cāhamāna dominions the peasants must have suffered a great deal on account of the contributions they had to make for the fees and maintenance of royal officials of all ranks Under the Kalacuris sometimes four officials called *visenim* (whatever functionary the term might indicate), *pattakila, duhsādhya* and *vaisayika* were authorised to obtain their maintenance fee (*ādāya*) from the peasants [1] The number of such officials seem to be greater in the Candella records, which empower the forest-officials (*ātavika*), irregular soldiers (*cātas*)[2] and royal officials in general to receive their respective dues (*svam-svam-ābhāvyam*) [3] However, under the Cāhamānas the practice seems to have been limited to the royal officers *pratihāra* and *balādhipa* It is not quite clear whether the dues known as *ādāya* and *ābhāvya* were perquisites paid to the royal officials in addition to their remuneration In earlier times similar dues were collected only for the maintenance of the royal family as can be inferred from the grants of Harsa and early Pāla kings, a feature which continued in the Bangladesh of our period under the name *rājakul-ābhāvya* [4] Probably these dues in early times were collected by the officials appointed by the royal families Now not only did such contributions increase in number, but, what is more serious, they probably came to be gathered by the officials for whom they were meant This was bound to prove oppressive to the peasants,

[1] *CII*, IV 63, ll 29–30
[2] *EI*, XXXII, 14, Charter, I, l 33
[3] Ibid , Charter 2 l 16
[4] *IB* III 156–7, ll 31–2

whose exploitation in this manner was a peculiar feature of Indian feudalism

The process of feudalisation of crafts and commerce in the sense that state income from these sources was granted to temples was carried forward in Rājasthān, Mālwa and Gujarat during this period The Cāhamāna records furnish several illustrations A record of 1161 of Alhanadeva grants a monthly amount of five drammas from the custom-house in the grounds of Naddūla to a Jain temple [1] Another grant from the custom-house of Naddūla at the rate of six drammas (it is not clear whether monthly or yearly) was made to the god Tripurusa in 1114 [2] We again learn that Alhana granted in perpetuity four drammas per month from the custom-house for the daily offerings to an image of Gaurī installed by the Queen Śankaradevī [3] A copper-plate of 1156 refers to the grant of a *rūpaka* per day to be paid out of the collection at the toll-house (*mandapikā*) to some Jain temples by a feudatory of Kumārapāla [4] A record of 973 shows that one high dignitary at Śākambharī granted one *vimśopaka* on every *kūtaka* of salt, and another granted to the same god one dramma on the sale of every horse [5] These cases amply demonstrate that a part of the income in cash derived from the state levy on the sale of various goods was granted to Jain and brāhmanical temples Furthermore, under the Cāhamānas state levies on flourishing crafts were also donated for religious purpose A record of 1132 informs us that two Cāhamāna princes together with their mother ordered two *pallikās* out of those due to the royal family from each oil-mill (*ghānaka*) to be given to the Jain saints in and outside Nāduladāgikā (Nādlāi) [6] Income in cash from such levies may also have been made over to brāhmanas Records of this nature are also found in smaller kingdoms Thus an inscription dated 955 of the Śurasenas from Bayana in the former Bharatpur state speaks of the collection of three drammas for a deity at one *mandapikā*

[1] *EI*, IX, p 63 with fn 8

[2] Dasharatha Sharma, op cit, Appendix G, III, ll 18–19 Since some words are missing, the sense is not quite clear, but there is no doubt that some grant was made by the king from the custom-house for religious purpose

[3] Ibid, IV, plate 2, ll 15–17

[4] *IA*, XLI, p 203

[5] *EI* II, 8, verses 48–9

[6] *EI* XI, 4, ll 1–9

and the same amount at another [1] Similarly the *praśastis* of Baijnāth inform us that a local chief granted daily two drammas out of his income from the *mandapikā* [2]

Feudalisation of trade and industry also went on apace in the Paramāra territory Yaśovarman, a feudatory of the Paramāras in the Nāsīk District in the second half of the eleventh century, confirmed the grant to a Jain temple of not only several plots of land but also of two oil-mills, fourteen shops of merchants and fourteen drammas in cash [3] An inscription of Cāmuṇḍarāja dated 1080 found at Arthūnā, twenty-eight miles west of Bānswārā in Rājasthān, taken to be one of the two capitals of the Paramāras, contains more detailed information It notifies grants in both cash and kind, profession-wise as well as commodity-wise Every house of the traders in the local bazaar is asked to contribute a dramma on the Caitra festival, on the shops of the braziers is imposed a dramma per month (presumably per shop), and distillers are asked to pay four *rūpakas* [4] As regards commodities one *varnikā* is levied on every *bharaka* of candied sugar and jaggery, one *rūpaka* on each *bharaka* of Bengal madder, thread and cotton, one and a half *rūpakas* on each *kotika* of clothing fabric, and one *mānaka* on each *mutaka* of salt [5] Besides these dues to be paid in cash by the sellers of commodities in the bazaar, certain dues are levied in kind Thus one nut is prescribed on every *bharaka* of coconuts, one from every thousand arecanuts, one *palikā* on every jar of butter and sesamum oil, and one small bunch on every large bundle of flowers [6] Some other levies in cash and kind made on oil, grain (especially barley), citron and cattle-fodder are also transferred to the god Maṇḍaleśa [7] Thus in Arthūnā, which was a great centre of trade and economic activities as can be also inferred from numerous antiquities found there, a considerable portion of the tolls was donated to a local temple for its maintenance

It is natural to expect more such instances in the dominions of

[1] *EI*, XXII, p 120 ff

[2] Ibid , I, p 97 ff

[3] *EI*, XIX, 10, ll 17–31

[4] *EI*, XIV, 21, verses 73–4

[5] Ibid, verses 61–2

[6] Ibid , verses 71–2 Barnett's translation with footnotes on *EI*, XIV, pp 309–10 has been followed

[7] Ibid , verses 76–81

the Caulukyas, for the coastal region of Gujarāt facilitated more trade and industry The term toll-house (*sulka-mandapikā*) is mentioned in several inscriptions,[1] and the practice of granting a portion of royal income from it seems to have been common A grant of 1156 informs us that Kumārapāla granted one dramma daily out of the collection at the *mandapikā* of Nadol in favour of a temple [2] Another inscription gives the impression that tolls in cash on the sale of various articles were transferred by Bhīmadeva II in 1230 to two temples for defraying the expenses of the temple service and feeding the brāhmanas [3] It seems that the local traders of Salakhanapuri also made to the temples certain grants in cash on the sale of various articles apparently under royal orders [4]

The process of converting royal income from trade into religious benefactions also affected foreign trade We know of a case from Konkan where duties levied in coins of gold on vessels coming from outside were given away to the members of a religious sect [5] Similar concessions may have been made to secular assigness

All these instances from Western India are strong proof of the feudalisation of crafts and commerce The grant to temples of cash income from the sale-tax and tolls on various commodities may be compared to money fiefs granted in mediaeval Europe We do not know whether such fiefs in India were assigned to secular functionaries although some contributions earmarked for officials in the Kalacuri, Candella and Cāhamāna dominions may have been collected in cash and therefore may be taken as some kind of money-fief But this is by no means certain, and hence the European analogy cannot be pressed very far

A survey of feudal practices in Northern India during the eleventh and twelfth centuries suggests that in certain respects feudal economy reached its climax at this time Never before was land donated to secular and religious beneficiaries on such a large scale, never before were agrarian and communal rights undermined by land grants so widely, never before was the peasantry subjected to so many taxes and so much subinfeudation, never

[1] *IA*, VI, 202 1 9
[2] *ABORI*, XXIII, 316–8
[3] P Niyogi, op cit, p 201
[4] *IA*, VI, 202, ll 8–26, Abstract on p 203
[5] *EI*, III, 40, ll 56–7

before were services, high and low, rewarded by land grants in such numbers as now, and finally never before were revenues from trade and industry converted into so many grants But at the same time the period witnessed certain cracks in the feudal economy, especially in Western India, to which we shall now turn our attention Feudalism, based on self-sufficient economy, the lesser use of coins, and the intensive subjection of the peasantry, was disturbed by the emergence of new economic forces in Northern India towards the last days of what is known as Hindu rule

By the end of the period the progressive role of land grants in opening new areas to cultivation seems to have been exhausted in Bengal, Bihar, U P, Mālwa and Gujarāt The fact that the charters of Bengal specify the yield in cash and demarcate the boundaries of the donated area[1] in precise terms shows that the colonising activities of the beneficiaries were restricted The grants from Mālwa and Gujarāt also delimit the boundaries of the villages The introduction of this element of precision and definition reflects the anxiety to allow no more concessions to the donees than were strictly warranted by the terms of the charters, it did not leave much scope for absorbing their pioneering activities in the colonisation of new areas

Similarly forced labour or *visti*, characteristic of feudalism and considered as a source of production in Western India under the Maitrakas of Valabhī, the Rāṣṭrakūtas and the Gurjara-Pratīhāras,[2] practically disappears in the records of the Paramāras, the Caulukyas and the Cāhamānas Evidently the practice had died out in their dominions Similarly the Gāhadavāla and Candella records do not mention forced labour The Pāla and Sena grants, however, speak of *sarvapida*, and some Kalacuri inscriptions refer to *visti* But by and large the practice of forced labour seems to have been on the wane, which may be taken as a symptom of the loosening of the economic bonds of the feudal order Possibly forced labour was commuted into money payments But we have very little to support our hypothesis unless we fall back upon some evidence from Kashmir, which we have excluded from our present survey The *Rājataranginī* informs us that forced labour consisted of carrying loads (*rūdha-bhārodhi*), which were of thirteen unspeci-

[1]*IB*, III, 7 ll 37–54, no 11, ll 39–51

[2]The term *utapadyamana visti* is a common phrase in their records

fied kinds In one case the villagers who failed to carry loads for a year were punished with fines equal to the value of the load, based on the higher prevalent prices in the neighbouring areas[1] In all likelihood these fines were levied in cash, which suggests that forced labour could be commuted by money payment Sometimes it was commuted into payment in both cash and kind When a temple was plundered in the reign of Harsa (1089–1101), the priests prayed for exemption from impressed labour[2] on the ground of paying in cash and kind We have, however, no clear instances of peasants securing exemption from corvée by means of monetary payment either in Kashmir or other parts of Northern India But the increasing use of coins in this period, which we shall consider later, points to the possibility of peasants purchasing freedom from impressed labour by paying money Further, peasant rebellions such as those of the Kaivarttas in East Bengal may also have compelled the princes to reduce the rigours of the practice Probably the existence of numerous towns in Western India, as we shall see later, was connected with the disappearance of *visti*, for peasants could flee to towns where they could work as artisans and craftsman

Certain other developments seem to have caused dents in the self-sufficient economy of the rural areas One was the cutting adrift of villages which had been integral parts of the economy of an area for a long time and joining them to new areas Numerous villages granted to the temples, especially in Central and Western India, were not always situated in the area adjoining the existing property of the donees, with the result that they had to enter into new economic relationships with the temples to which they were granted, and in some respects had to sever their ties with the surrounding rural area to whose self-sufficiency they contributed Thus the temple of Somnāth possessed as many as 2000 villages, which certainly did not form a compact territory, and villages granted by successive rulers were apparently isolated from one another In Uttar Pradesh the process can be illustrated by the grants of villages made to the influential priestly family of Jāgu Śarmā The estate of this family was spread over as many as 18 *pattalās* of the Gāhadavāla kingdom and therefore cut across the economic self-sufficiency of several units In the scattered

[1]Tr M A Stein, Vol I, VV 172–1, see also footnote on 172–4
[2]Ibid 1081–8

villages managed by him the beneficiary could change the pattern of agricultural production by insisting that the village cultivate crops suited to its soil or to the needs of the donee rather than to the exigencies of its self-sufficient economy

Further signs of the weakening of the static rural economy of the villages can be seen in the practice of the state and its beneficiaries not making the direct use of the labour service of the craftsmen, as we find in the Candella kingdom, but of claiming the fruits of their service either in kind or cash As a first step it seems that traders and artisans—there being hardly any difference between them—were required to pay their dues in kind to the state in Western India, and were then eventually asked to pay in cash, especially in respect of the sale of their wares Instead of forcing the artisans and traders to remain attached to the village granted to the temple, they were required to pay dues in money with which the temple could buy its services Thus in Mālwa, Rājasthān and Gujarāt it was considered no longer necessary to develop the temple as a self-sufficient economic unit by providing it with the services of artisans and traders

Although this kind of development was mainly confined to towns, their number was not inconsiderable On the basis of various sources Dasharatha Sharma has compiled a list of 131 places in the Cāhamāna dominions,[1] most of which seem to have been towns D C Ganguly[2] enumerates twenty towns in the Paramāra kingdom, mainly in Mālwa To this may be added the well-known town Arthūnā, their second capital Pushpa Niyogi has compiled a list of eight towns under the Caulukyas in Gujarāt,[3] although along with the port-towns with which the whole of Gujarāt coast was studded their number would be far greater The Arab accounts speak of numerous towns in Sind and Western India [4] On the strength of the itinerary of Albirūni and the narratives of Sultan Mahmud's expedition into India Pushpa Niyogi has prepared a list of twenty-five towns[5] in Northern India, which is not exhaustive The number of towns, however, do not seem to be large in Eastern India although all the nine

[1]Op cit, Appendix L.
[2]*History of the Paramāra Dynasty*, p 239
[3]P Niyogi, op cit, pp 120–1
[4]Ibid, pp 119–21
[5]Ibid, p 121

victory-camps of the Pālas may have been towns To these may be added four capitals of the Senas in northern and eastern Bengal [1] In general the records leave the impression that Western India contained numerous towns, some of which were fairly large

From the existence of such towns in Western India it is reasonable to assume a considerable amount of surplus produce, by way of food and clothing, to meet the needs of the people living there Some towns were very thickly populated, Anahilapātaka contained as many as forty-eight marts [2] The needs of these towns naturally involved a good volume of internal trade between them and the villages, which must have shaken the stagnant economy of the latter

The earlier trade in horse, oil and salt grew in later times in Rājasthān The Cāhamāna inscriptions unmistakably point to thriving commerce carried on by horse-dealers, *mahājanas*, *seths*, and oilmillers [3] Especially trade in horse and salt from the Sāmbhar lake was a source of profitable tolls to the state But it is significant that from the eleventh century internal trade came to cover several daily necessaries which affected the life of the common people The Cāhamāna inscriptions show that Rājasthān had a good trade in wheat, *mudga*, resin, oil, betel-leaves, spices, pulses, etc [4] We also hear of merchants in bronze and cloth and also of distillers and weavers [5] In fact the Cāhamāna inscriptions unfold the genesis of the activities of the Mārwār merchants who became famous as Mārwāris in later times

The Paramāra records also indicate considerable internal trade An inscription refers to flourishing trade in the area round the town of Arthūnā in Rājasthān Here trade was carried on in articles of daily consumption such as grain, especially barley, thread, cotton, cloth, salt, sugar [6] and oil It seems that madder was brought from Bengal to Arthūnā for sale [7] Another record of a Paramāra feudatory from Nāsik speaks of shops and oilmills in that area [8]

[1] Ibid, pp 118–19 (Lakhnauti, Nadiyā, Vijayapura, Vikrampura)
[2] *Kumārapālacarita* quoted in P Niyogi, op cit, p 120
[3] Ed D R Bhandarkar, *EI*, XI, 4
[4] Dasharatha Sharma op cit, p 298
[5] Ibid, p 299
[6] *EI*, XIV, 21, 69–79
[7] Ibid, verse 69
[8] Ibid, XIX, 10, ll 17–31

The traders, known as *vaniks*, seem to have been a very prosperous class in Gujarāt The great millionaires Vastupāla, Tejapāla and Jagadu are well known [1] They derived their wealth from both internal and foreign trade, and were obviously assisted by ordinary merchants whose economic activities touched the life of the common folk A class of merchants known as *pedaio* sold grain, etc (*kan-ādi-vikretā-vanik*) [2] We also hear of an ordinary trader who[3] sold only gram (*canaka-vikraya-kāra*) This evidence would imply that even in the rural areas some people paid for their food

Uttar Pradesh gives poor indication of internal trade, although the use of the term *pravani-kara* in the Gāhadavāla inscriptions signifies taxes levied from retail traders Similarly Bundelkhand, which produced such cash-crops as indigo, cotton and sugarcane, may have developed considerable rural trade The gifts recorded by a sresthi family show that traders formed a wealthy community in the Candella territory [4] Trade seems to have flourished more vigorously in Baghelkhand under the Kalacuris Every town and village had its toll-house (*mandapikā*) The articles of sale in the markets of towns and villages included foodgrains, salt, pepper, liquor, oil, grass and vegetables [5]

Internal trade had not altogether languished in the earlier period in Eastern India, as would appear from the mention of the *tarika* (officer in charge of ferry dues or navy), and the *śaulkika* (collector of tolls) in Pāla land charters, although these officers are not named in the Sena charters Now we hear of a new officer the *hattapati*[6] or supervisor of markets

On the whole in the eleventh and twelfth centuries Northern India witnessed an expansion of commercial activities, which seem to have declined during the four centuries following the collapse of the Gupta rule One of the main causes of the increasing internal trade seems to have been the revival of foreign trade to which we shall now turn our attention

It would be wrong to hold that all foreign trade and commerce

[1] A K Majumdar, *The Caulukyas of Gujarat*, pp 267, 284–5
[2] *Desīnāmamala* of Hemacandra VI, 59
[3] Merutunga, *Prabandhacintāmani*, ed Jinavijaya Muni, p 70
[4] S K Mitra, *The Early Rulers of Khajuraho*, pp 181–2
[5] Mirashi, *CII*, IV p CLXX
[6] *IB* III, 16, l 16

stopped between 750 and 1000, but signs of foreign trade between 600 and 900 seem to be weak The evidence we have for the external commerce of this period does not compare favourably with Indian trade with the Roman empire in the time of the Sātavāhanas and Kusānas or with the Byzantine empire in Gupta times, nevertheless, a sizable coastal trade was carried between India on the one hand and the Persian Gulf and Arabia via the Arab sea on the other The Arab accounts mention a few ports on the western coast of India in the seventh century [1] Most Arab accounts of the foreign commerce of India, however, relate to the ninth and particularly to the tenth century, when they mention many Indian ports [2] This indicates the revival of trade on the western coast from the tenth century A D , which can be linked up with the maritime activities of the Colas from the close of the tenth century A succession of strong Cola rulers contributed to the progress of commerce with South-East Asia

An epigraphic record of 1008 shows that Konkan carried on flourishing commerce not only with the coastal areas but also with distant foreign lands (*dvipāntara*),[3] which was a source of income in cash to its ruler, the *māndalika* Rattarāja He charged a *gadiyāna* of gold from every vessel arriving from foreign lands, and a *dharana* of gold from every ship arriving from a place called Kandalamūlīya in the coastal area [4] Coastal trade may have been carried on in local boats All this indicates growing commerce on the Konkan coast, which also had a town of merchants called Manigrāma [5]

Similarly India maintained commercial intercourse with China At first most of this trade was monopolised by the Arabs and later by the Chinese, both of whom carried on commerce in their own ships There is hardly any indication of trade being carried by Indian merchants abroad until the tenth century A D [6] But the *Mānasollāsa*, a work of the twelfth century, advises that Indian ships should pay one-tenth of the price of their goods as duty in the harbours of the king [7] In the thirteenth century we hear of an

[1]Nadvi, *Arab-Bharat Ke Sambandh*, p 46
[2]Ibid
[3]*EI*, III, 296–7
[4]*EI*, III, 40, ll 56–7
[5]Ibid , l 44
[6]A K Majumdar, *The Caulukyas*, p 267
[7]*GOS*, XXVIII, Ch IV, verses 374–6

Indian merchant called Jagaḍu who used to trade regularly with Persia and transport goods in his own ship His agent at Hormuz was an Indian [1] Besides, references to the piratical activities of Indians on the western coast, for instance Marco Polo's complaints against Gujarātı pirates in the thirteenth century, presuppose the existence of shipping [2]

Certainly India witnessed considerable shipbuilding activities in the thirteenth century Marco Polo refers to many Indian ships which visited Fu-Chau (Fuju) in China with many merchants and carried cargoes of various merchandise to that place [3] Moreover, we hear of several busy ports visited by the Arabs and the Chinese on the western coast The number of ports mentioned in the tenth century by the Arab writers is far greater than that we find in seventh century [4] All this points to some revival of the foreign commerce of India on its west coast during the period from tenth to the thirteenth century, corroborated by increasing references to money tolls and sale of commodities in local contemporary donation records

The nature of foreign commerce seems to have undergone a change In the early centuries of the Christian era India's exports consisted mainly of luxury articles, spices, silk and fine muslins But now it was extended to tanned leather, leather goods, buckram (coarse cloth) and other textiles [5] While buckram or coarse linen may have been made of hemp or flax, the Chinese account also refers to the export of fine hemp [6] According to the Chinese and Arab accounts sugarcane and ginger were also exported from Mālwa and Gujarāt during this period. Coarse cloth, cotton goods, hemp and sugar were substantial exports, for they would have a wider market, not confined to the upper classes of Arabia and China Fine cotton goods were exported in the

[1] A K Majumdar, op cit, p 267 The work *Jagaducarita*, whose hero is a merchant, was completed some time in the fourteenth century Ibid, p 420 In 1211 a Hindu merchant carried on flourishing trade at Ghazni (ibid, p 267)

[2] A K Majumdar, op cit, p 268

[3] *Marco Polo*, II, 231

[4] Nadvi, *Arab-Bharat Ke Sambhandha*, p 46

[5] Ibid, pp 265–66

[6] P Niyogi, *The Economic History of Northern India*, p 139

early centuries of the Christian era, but hemp and sugar[1] do not figure as exports then and thus appear to be quite new commodities of foreign trade We have no idea of the volume in trade in these two articles, but undoubtedly they were something more than luxury articles, and thus their export was bound to affect ordinary producers who would be paid in cash for the sale of their cotton, hemp and sugarcane So far as China is concerned these articles along with the usual luxury goods played the same role in denuding her of gold and silver in the tenth-twelfth centuries as the spices did in the case of Rome in the first century A D, so that, like Rome, China had to place restrictions on the trade with Malabar and Quilon in India in the twelfth century [2]

It is difficult to explain this revival of commerce during the two centuries preceding the Turkish conquest of India A possible factor that promoted commerce in Eastern India and explains the frequent mention of coins in the land grants of the Senas of Bengal is the increasing cultivation of two important commercial crops, coconut and arecanut Commonly mentioned as the products granted in North and East Bengal during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, they do not find a place either in the grants of Gupta times or in the Pāla grants from North Bengal In East Bengal arecanut is first mentioned in a grant of about the seventh-eighth century A D,[3] but coconut seems to have been introduced a couple of centuries later The Candra and Varman grants mention both arecanut and coconut as the products of the donated land, but they do not stipulate its yield in coins However, most Sena grants state the income in money only in those cases in which these two products are specified Apparently brought to Bengal from South India, the two fruit trees came to be regarded as sources of income from the land from the eleventh century A D

[1]Sugar figures at one place as an export from India in the *Periplus*, but it was not important enough to be included in the consolidated list of exports given by that text

[2]*Chau Ju-Kua*, p 18f, quoted in P Niyogi, p 147 Practically no Chinese coins have been found on the western coast of India, but the possibility of their existence cannot be discounted Probably the Chinese sent ingots of gold and silver which were melted into coins or ornaments by the Indians However, a large hoard of Chinese coins found in Tanjore is indicative of Chinese commercial relations with South India

[3]'The Ashrafpur Copper-plates of Devakhadga', *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, I, 6, p 90, plate B, l 8

and the Islamic East in the twelfth century,[1] although it is thought that the balance of trade lay in favour of the former Whatever might be the precise reasons for the revival of trade and commerce such a rivival cannot be doubted, and the fact that it was beginning to undermine the self-sufficient feudal economy based on land in Western India cannot be brushed aside

Internal trade seems to have been facilitated by some improvements in the means of transport An inscription of 955 from Bayānā in the former state of Bharatpur seems to refer to a levy as *octroi* duty on every horse-load of merchandise carried through a village granted to the god Visnu by a lady member of the ruling family of the Śūrasenas[2] This would suggest that from the second half of the tenth century horses began to be used as pack animals Another inscription refers to a state levy made on camel-loads A grant of a *pailā* from every incoming or outgoing caravan exceeding ten camels and twenty bullocks is made to a temple in the former Jodhpur state[3] Although these records belong to the close of the thirteenth century, the practice of using camels may have started earlier, for the Pāla inscriptions and the *Mānasollāsa*[4] show that buffaloes, camels and bullocks were used for transport in military expeditions Thus in addition to bullocks, horses and camels came to be used for carrying goods on a wide scale It is true that camels would not be used in Eastern India, but horses might have been used there as beasts of burden Numerous allusions to the sale of horses in inscriptions indicate that they were valued not only for military but also for commercial purposes We can therefore postulate that the introduction of these new means of transport made for greater speed of conveyance over a longer distance

The progress in commerce, internal and external, can be better understood in the light of numerous references to money coinage in the epigraphic and literary records of the period as well as to

[1]C E Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p 79

[2]The term used is *prati-ghoṭakam ca dāne drammo devasya bhagavato vihitaḥ*, *EI*, XXII, 20, verse 41 In the context of the grant of two villages and three drammas daily from each of the two market-places (*mandapikās*), Srīpatha and Vusāvata (ibid , verses 39–40), the alternative suggestion of R D Banerji that the levy was made on every horse-load seems to be correct, although he also suggests that it was made whenever a horse was sold (ibid , 121)

[3]*EI*, XI, 4, XXII ll 4–7

[4]Ch XX, verse 1068

the discovery of coins belonging to this time After A D 1000 we find signs of the revival of coinage in Northern India, although this was mainly confined to Uttar Pradesh, Central India, Mālwa, Gujarāt and Rājasthān, the evidence regarding Eastern India including Bengal and Bihar is very weak In fact it has been argued with force that cowrie was the medium of exchange in Eastern India In Bengal the situation certainly changed under the Senas and their contemporaries The Sena land charters estimated the revenue yield of the donated villages or lands in terms of *kaparddaka-purānas*, of which nothing is heard under the Pālas A record of 1234 from the Tippera District specified in cash the annual income of each one of the plots of land donated by Dāmodaradeva to twenty brāhmanas, whose total income from all these amounted to a hundred *purānas*,[1] although we are not sure whether collection was made in cash No coins discovered so far can be ascribed with certainty either to the Sena or to the Pāla kings or to any other ruler of Bengal belonging to this period, but epigraphic references suggest that coins, less in use under the Pālas, were much in vogue under the Senas

As we proceed westward we find more indication of the use of coins The first Gāhadavāla ruler to issue coins was Madanapāla (1102–11) Numerous coins known as drammas are attributed to his son Govindacandra (1112–55) The frequency with which his coins are still found suggests their wide currency Very little is known of the coins belonging to other rulers Of the important mediaeval dynasties of Northern India the Kalacuris of Dāhala were the first to revive gold coinage, and coins of several of their kings have been discovered The Kalacuri gold coinage was first issued by Gāngeyadeva (1015–40) It was followed by the Candella rulers, who did not issue any coins in the first century of their rule The practice was begun by Kīrttivarman (1060–1100) and followed by his successors, who issued drammas of three varieties The progressively increasing use of coins in the Candella dominions is indicated by an inscription of 1212,[2] which refers to the execution of a deed (*vitta-bandha*) mortgaging land for money although the amount involved therein is not mentioned

[1] *EI*, XXX, 57–8
[2] *EI*, XXV, I, ll 10–14

Coins in considerable numbers have been attributed to the so-called allied Rajput dynasties which arose on the ruins of the Pratihāra empire Thus the Cāhamānas are credited with numerous coins, some of which have been brought to light Their dominions show signs of prosperous trade and commerce which made such coinage necessary Revenues from shops and the sale of commodities estimated in money were donated to the temples As far as the Guhilas are concerned nearly 2000 silver coins, bearing the legend Śrī Guhila, were discovered at Agra in 1869,[1] but their present whereabouts remain untraceable Many of the *gadhaiya* coins, discovered in thousands, are attributed to the Guhilas and Cāhamānas Similarly coins ranging from the last quarter of the tenth century to the first quarter of the twelfth century are ascribed by Cunningham to the Tomaras, who belonged to Ajmer and Delhi Mention may also be made of the copper coins issued by the Narwār rulers of Gwalior in the thirteenth century Two hoards, one of 791 copper coins[2] and the other of 926 copper coins,[3] are ascribed to them

As regards the Paramāras of Mālwa, coins are mentioned in some of their inscriptions (the Arthūnā inscription found in Bānswārā in Rājasthān) The only Paramāra ruler to issue gold coins was Udayāditya, who ruled over parts of Central and Northern India between 1060 and 1087[4]

The revival of coins in Central India, Uttar Pradesh, Rājasthān, Mālwa and Gujarāt can be linked with indications of increasing trade and commerce in that area, particularly in Western India Inscriptions repeatedly mention toll-house (*mandapikā*), and the transfer of cash income from shops They show that in the coastal regions of Western India customs duties were realised in cash from foreign and Indian traders, in Konkan the first were required to pay in gold coins called *gadyāna*, and the second in gold coins called *dharana* The *Lekhapaddhati* contains drafts of documents which prove brisk trade and commerce, and the sale and purchase of commodities Its provision for departments dealing with trade and mints is corroborated by epigraphic evidence from the kingdom of the Caulukyas

[1]Reported by A C L Carlleyle, in *ASI*, Report for the year 1871–72, IX, 95
[2]C R Singhal, *Bibliography of Indian Coins*, pt I, p 95
[3]Ibid , p 102
[4]Ibid , p 96

A wide difference can be seen in respect of coinage and trade between Eastern India on the one hand and Northern and Western India on the other In Eastern India including Orissa the cowrie was the chief medium of exchange Inscriptions do not suggest much trade or many towns in this area Apparently the self-sufficient feudal economy was stronger in the east than in the west But surprisingly enough, if we leave out Orissa, land service grants to vassals and officials are found more commonly in the west than in the east This may be due to the paucity of epigraphic records in Eastern India, which was subject to frequent floods and invasions

We have, however, a very important piece of evidence from Central India which shows that revenue was assessed in cash and not in kind, as was the case in earlier times in various parts of the country A record of the early thirteenth century (1213) informs us that a business document executed apparently by the *mahāmāndalika* Pamparāja, probably a feudatory of the Kalacuris of Ratanpur, fixed the revenue of the village Jaiparā at 130 *Sarāhagadāma-āchus* as previously settled and 140 *Vijayarāja-tankas* [1] It also states that the revenue of another village was fixed at 150 *Vijayarāja-tankas* [2] Although a gift document executed in favour of the *gaitā* Laksmīdhara, it shows without doubt the practice of assessing revenue in cash This need not be attributed to Muslim influence, for the Delhi Sultanate established in 1206 hardly covered this part of the country On the other hand the existence of the practice under the Sultanate should be taken as a culmination of the process that had begun in North India in the eleventh and twelfth centuries

The Panjab and the North-Western regions provide indications of the use of coins on a considerable scale in the latter half of the tenth century This was partly stimulated by the Arab occupation of Sind which promoted trade contacts with Western India Whatever might be the other reasons, the area had plenty of coined money in the beginning of the eleventh century When Mahmūd captured Multan in 1005–6 the inhabitants are said to have been forced to pay a fine of 20 million dirhams (apparently

[1] *CII*, IV, 116, ll 1–11
[2] Ibid, ll 7–8

the same as dramma) to save the city from being sacked[1] From the temple in the fort of Nagarkot in the upper Indus valley Mahmūd is alleged to have taken in 1008–9 seventy million dirhams in coined money, 70,000 *mans* of gold and silver ingots and rich clothing, a folding house made of silver and a richly decorated throne[2] From the temple of Somnāth he is said to have taken over twenty million dinars worth of spoil When the Ray was captured, the army carried off 500,000 dinars worth of jewels, 2,60,000 dinars in coined money, over 30,000 dinars worth of gold and silver vessels, 5300 garments, suits of woven and regal (? *khusrawāni*) clothes valued at 20,000 dinars and 50 loads of books excluding those of the Mu'tzilla, philosophers and Shiā, which were burnt forthwith[3] We are not concerned here with other items of spoil, but those in coined money certainly speak for the widespread currency of coins in Gujarāt While the numbers of coins mentioned in the Muslim accounts indicate the actual use of coins, the existence of bullion in gold and silver points to the possibility of converting these metals into coins In fact part of the bullion and precious stones taken from the temple treasures of India was converted into negotiable form by skilled valuers and assayers at Ghazna[4] It is true that Western India was denuded of its coins as a result of the plundering expeditions of Mahmūd of Ghazni, but the Ghaznavids issued their own coins in the Panjab, where a mixed silver-copper currency was continued on the old Hindu models[5] The issue of a mixed copper-silver currency there suggests that coins were used even by the common people

A striking feature of the monetary system of the period is the gradual change from gold to silver-gilt, silver, silver-bronze and finally copper, which is illustrated by the coinage of the Candellas and the Kalacuris Sometimes seen as a setback from gold to baser metal, the process has some deeper significance Confined to heavy transactions, gold coins would be handled only by the wealthy few But silver, silver-bronze and copper coins would command a wider circulation among the masses of the people Therefore what appears as a process of degeneration from pure

[1] C E Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, p 76
[2] Ibid, p 78
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid, p 79

and costly metal to base and cheap metal should be really taken as a device to meet the day-to-day exchange requirements of the common folk

Obviously billon and copper coins would have the widest circulation among the vast masses of the people In spite of their easy subjection to the corrosive influence of the tropical climate the survivals of the copper currency of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Central and Western India are impressive and bear sufficient testimony to their use in ordinary transactions Of the Gāhadavāla kings the copper coins of Govindacandra are known In the eleventh century the Kalacuri king Gāngeyadeva of Dāhala, who revived gold coinage, also issued copper coins, but more copper coins may be attributed to the Kalacuris of Ratanpur in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,[1] although a hoard of copper coins from Bilaspur may be assigned to the beginning of the eleventh century[2] In the case of the Ratanpur ruler Pratāpamalla (1200–25) only his copper coins have as yet been discovered so far[3] The Kalacuris initiated the Hanumān type of copper coins which were popularised by the Candellas[4] This, sometimes recognised as drammas, seems to have been a common currency in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries under the Candella rulers,[5] who also issued other kinds of copper coins Copper coins were also issued by the Cāhamāns,[6] whose dominions give indication of growing rural trade Billon coins seem to have been issued in good numbers by the Cāhamanas[7] and the Tomaras, and in the Panjab a mixed silver-copper currency continued to be minted by the Ghaznavids on the old Hindu models[8] More hoards of billon and copper coins may be discovered in future, but what has come down to us is enough to demonstrate the advent of exchange economy among the common people in a large part of Northern and Western India

Two other media of exchange, iron coins and cowries, also prevailed, the first in Western India and the second in Bengal and

[1]Mirashi, *CII*, IV, pp CLXXXV-CLXXXVII

[2]*JNSI*, XVIII, 111–2

[3]Mirashi, op cit, p CLXXXVII

[4]Ibid, p CLXXXVIII

[5]S K Mitra, *The Early Rulers of Khajurāho*, p 183

[6]Dasharatha Sharma, *Early Chauhān Dynasties*, p 303

[7]Ibid, p 305

[8]C E Bosworth, op cit, p 79

Orissa It seems that the peasants made payment in cowries under the Senas

The use of silver, billon, silver-bronze, and particularly copper coins and probably cowries, was bound to soften the rigours of payment in kind and labour We have no evidence to show whether payments in kind were converted into cash payments, although some Sena and late Kalacuri land charters clearly suggest assessment in cash, which apparently culminated in the general introduction of the system of cash payment of revenues under the Delhi Sultanate We have no records to show whether services in labour to the state were commuted into cash payments But the disappearance of forced labour, which prevailed in Central and Western India right from the second to the tenth century A D, can certainly be tied up with the use of copper coins in a large part of this area We can assume that in lieu of manual work on the construction of tanks, roads, fortresses, etc, the peasants paid some contribution in cash which enabled the authorities to carry on such work Thus the traditional feudal structure based on payment in kind and services was weakened by the use of money

The picture that emerges from our study is one of contrasts On the one hand we notice the multiplication of land grants to secular and religious beneficiaries, the intensification of subinfeudation, conversion of revenues from crafts and commerce into religious benefices, the depression of peasantry through taxes, the transfer and taking over of communal rights, on the other we notice the definite delimitation of donated land and the specification of its yield in kind and cash, the disappearance of forced labour (*visti*), the revival of internal and external trade, and the resurrection of money exchange over a wide area At its height Indian feudalism contained certain seeds of disintegration Therefore, in the two centuries preceding the Turkish conquest feudal economy reaches its climax, but at the same time it shows some cracks, especially in Western India

CONCLUSION

Our study shows that the critical characteristics of a feudal formation are found in the social structure of early mediaeval India First, it is dominated by a class of landlords[1] who claim and collect rent from the peasants on the ground that they are owners of the land Second, we notice a class of subject peasantry Obviously every peasant family constitutes the smallest unit of production and after meeting its needs of subsistence pays the remainder to the landlord Peasants actually possess the land but are compelled to pay rents in cash, kind or labour to the landlords Third, the rents and labour services are collected by the landlords not with the object of promoting production or the economic growth of the country but mainly for their own consumption The peasants pay not because of expectations of return but because of custom, coercion, legal sanction and ideological influence Priests write religious texts which try to prove the low origins and social status of the peasants and producing classes in comparison with those who neither cultivate nor pursue any handicrafts but live on rents Religious propaganda is backed by legal enforcement, for the landlords claim the rents and services from the peasants on the basis of the land charters granted to them by the king If legal and religious methods fail to pay, force is also used by the landlords These are therefore extra-economic methods under which a peasant has to operate He does not produce in response to the laws of the market and has little scope for economic growth He functions in response to the needs of his landlord, who may take account of the interest of his overlord, the king In any case the peasant can perceive clearly that he is being exploited by the landlord, which exploitation cannot be easily seen by the worker in relation to the factory owner Fourth, the socio-economic formation that we

[1] In order to place this fact on a firmer basis a regionwise statistical analysis of land grants is needed

have in early mediaeval times is the concomitant of a predominantly agricultural economy in which local needs are satisfied locally and in which the scope for the functioning of the market system is extremely limited Naturally in such a society all services, religious, military, political, administrative, etc , are remunerated through grant of plots of land in the case of lower functionaries and through grants of revenues from villages in the case of higher functionaries Finally, handicrafts and artisanal activities are confined mainly to the countryside Artisans are attached either to villages or big estates or temple establishments Since there is direct relation between the consumer and the producer, traders or middlemen do not play any significant role They only procure and supply iron tools, oil, spices, etc , to the rural folk

The process which led to the rise of a class of landlords at the expense of the peasant possession of land really started in the early centuries of the Christian era The origin and development of feudalism is to be sought in the land grants made to brāhmanas from the first century A D onwards Their number becomes considerable in Northern India in the Gupta period and goes on increasing afterwards The monastery of Nālandā owned 200 villages in the reign of Harsa Villages granted to religious donees by the Pālas and Pratīhāras were considerable in number, but those allotted by the Rāstrakūtas were far more numerous One grant mentions 1400 and another 400 villages given in this manner Brāhmanas and temples were apparently granted land revenues not for rendering civil and military services to their patrons but for spiritual service In the benefices granted to them they were allowed fiscal rights and such administrative rights as the maintenance of law and order and collection of fines from criminals Hsuan Tsang states that high officers of the state were paid by land grants, but such grants are wanting because of the perishable nature of the material on which they were recorded If brāhmanas were paid by grants of revenues, how could the others be paid differently? There is hardly anything to prove that officers and others employed by the state were normally paid in cash If secular services were remunerated in money, why were religious services left out? In fact since the priests constituted an important element in society the mode of payment to them may have set the pattern for others It was found not only practical but also meritorious and auspicious to pay others by land grants

Inscriptions support the prevalence of the practice mainly from *circa* A D 1000 Land was granted by the ruling chiefs to their kinsmen as well as to others who served as vassals and officials In the period before *circa* A D 1000 we have more of such grants in Orissa and the Deccan than in Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh But in the eleventh and twelfth centuries we find a sizable number of secular assignees in Northern India, particularly in the dominions of the Gāhaḍavālas, Caṇdellas, Kalacuris, Caulukyas, and Paramāras

The process of creating a class of landlords spread unevenly over the country The practice first appeared in Mahārāstra around the beginning of the Christian era It seems that in the fourth-fifth centuries land grants covered a good part of Madhya Pradesh In the fifth-sixth centuries they became prominent in West Bengal and Bangladesh, in the sixth-seventh centuries in Orissa, in the seventh century in Assam, in the eighth century in Tamil Nadu and in the ninth-tenth centuries in Kerala In order to find new avenues of wealth for brāhmanas and to bring virgin land under cultivation the process of land grants started in outlying, backward and tribal areas first When it was found useful by the ruling class, it was gradually extended to mid-India or Madhyadeśa which was the civilised part of the country and the epicentre of brahmanical culture and society

Attention has been drawn to the absence of land grants in the Panjab in early mediaeval times [1] This situation looks intriguing because land grants in early mediaeval times formed a regular mode of payment for religious and secular services almost all over the country One could argue that possibly land grants in the Panjab were not made for religious purposes, and hence they were recorded on such perishable material as pieces of cloth or the bark of the birch tree But this explanation may not be satisfactory In the major part of the country the practice of land grants is linked with the decline of trade and commerce, with the decay of towns, and with lesser use of money But the situation seems to have been different in the Panjab The Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang refers to the flourishing towns in Haryana and the Panjab in the seventh century, one is Thanesar where merchandise from all the other parts of the country was collected, and the

[1] Supra, p 126, Romila Thapar, Presidential Address, Panjab History Conference, Patiala, 1975

other is Multan which continued to be a centre of trade according to the Arab accounts and under the Sultans A ninth century inscription refers to a place called Pehoa in the Karnal district which was a great centre of horse trade The Chinese traveller also speaks of the availability of gold, silver, copper and iron in different parts of the Panjab Interestingly enough in the period between 650 and 1000 the Panjab possesses a regular series of coins, which is in sharp contrast to the situation obtaining in the Pāla, Pratīhāra and Rāstrakūta kingdoms and also in the kingdoms of south India in early mediaeval times From the middle of the seventh century we have the coins of the Shahis of the Panjab and Afghanistan These were made of mixtures of gold and silver, and they were also made exclusively of silver and copper The neighbouring area of Kashmir also had a regular series of coins in the same period Although the gold coins of the Shahis are very few in number, large-scale use of silver coins, and particularly of copper, would suggest not only more trade and commerce but also the use of money even in ordinary transactions This would naturally obviate the need for payment through land grants As a possible consequence the Panjab, where even the ksatriyas could act as priests and where the brāhmanas did not find conditions congenial even in the early Christian centuries, did not have a strong class of brāhmana beneficiaries based on the possession of landed property

Whatever may be the position in the Panjab the epigraphs of north India use a rich vocabulary for various types of vassals Vassals were known as *bhūpāla, bhoktā, bhogī, bhogika, bhogiyana, bhogapatika, bhogirūpa, mahābhogī, brhadbhogī, brhadbhogika, rājā, rājñī, rājarājanaka, rājyanaka, rānaka, rājaputra, rājavallabha, thakkura, sāmanta, mahāsāmanta, mahāsāmantādhipati, mahāsāmantarānaka, sāmantaka rājā, māndalika* and probably *mahāmandaleśvara* Epigraphic records refer to grants made to *mahāsāmantas, rānakas, rājaputras* and *māndalikas* and some others, but others also seem to have been endowed with land Of these, big vassals were given the privilege of using the five great musical instruments The chief obligation of the vassals was to render military aid to their lords Whether a similar obligation devolved on the officials who were given feudal titles and paraphernalia is not definitely known, but there is little doubt about their gradual feudalisation, especially in Mahārāstra and Northern India

What distinguished early Indian feudalism was the provision for fiscal units of ten, or twelve, or sixteen villages and their multiples The law-book of Manu, a work of the first-second century A D, lays down that collectors in charge of ten villages or their multiples should be paid by land grants These units persisted in the Rāstrakūta and to some extent in the Pāla dominions But in the kingdoms of the Gurjara-Pratīhāras and their vassals and successors—the Cāhamānas, Paramāras, and Caulukyas—prevailed units of twelve or sixteen villages or their multiples Some were handed over to the members of the ruling family as personal estates, but others were possibly fiscal units placed under officers paid by land grants Apparently these new units were imposed by the Rajputs on the subjugated population It is hypothetical whether they had any Central Asian parallels and whether, like the German invasion in Europe, the penetration of the Hūnas and Gurjaras provided any external stimulus to the growth of feudalism

The socio-economic aspect of feudalism in India was intimately connected with the transformation of the śūdras, who were treated as the common helots of the three higher varnas, into peasants from the Gupta period onwards In the older settled areas śūdra labourers seem to have been provided with land In the backward areas a large number of tribal peasantry was annexed to the brāhmanical system through land grants, and they were called śūdras Therefore Hsuan Tsang, describes the śūdras as agriculturists, a fact corroborated by Albīrunī about four centuries later

The subjection of the Indian peasantry in early mediaeval times, especially in older settled regions, was a second striking development connected with the socio-economic dimensions of feudalism It can be explained by several factors, the most important of which was increase in the burden of taxation on the villagers The Gāhaḍavāla grants mention as many as eleven taxes in the villages, if all these were extracted by the state we doubt whether the peasants were left with even a bare subsistence In addition to the transfer of these taxes in many cases the donees were given the right to fixed and unfixed, proper and improper taxes The list of taxes in many grants, for instance in those of the Pālas, was not exhaustive, and the grantees were authorised to collect taxes covered by the term 'et cetera' (*ādi*), and 'all sources of

income' (*sarv-āya-sameta* or *samasta-pratyāya*) All this implies that they could make new impositions What the peasants paid as revenues to the state was converted as a result of grants into rents to the beneficiaries, many of whom, being priests or religious institutions, did not have to pay any portion of their income as tax to their donors [1]

A second factor that undermined the position of the peasants was the imposition of forced labour In the Maurya period slaves and hired labourers were subjected to such labour But from the second century A D the practice seems to have been extended to all classes of subjects Down to the tenth century the grants of Western and Central India indicate the prevalence of corvée (*visti*) In Bengal and Bihar peasants were subjected to all oppressions (*sarvapīdā*) from which exemption was granted in the villages given to religious donees by the Pālas Occasionally imposed by the ruling chiefs upon the villagers, impressed labour was bound to prove oppressive when transferred to local beneficiaries with a direct interest in the exploitation of the rural resources

A third factor that worsened the condition of the peasants was the right of subinfeudation The donees were authorised to enjoy the land, to get it enjoyed, to cultivate it and get it cultivated Some early mediaeval law-books refer to as many as four stages of landed interests between the king and the actual tiller of the soil, which can be also inferred from the epigraphs The right to cultivate the land or get it cultivated also implies the right to eject A well-established practice in Mālwa, Gujarāt, Rājasthān and Mahārāṣṭra, from the fifth to the twelfth century, it tended to reduce the permanent tenants to the position of tenants-at-will It is not clear whether such a right existed in other parts of Northern India, but it seems to have been typical of the pockets which were settled and fairly populated, abounding with cultivators In backward aboriginal areas peasants could not leave cultivation and escape to other villages In some parts of Central India and especially in Kangra and Orissa quite a few villages were transferred to the donees along with artisans, herdsmen and cultivators, tied down to the soil in the same manner as serfs in

[1]We have some instances of tax-paying *agrahāras* in Orissa and in some parts of South India

mediaeval Europe Perhaps the practice was rendered necessary by the scarcity of working population for running the rural economy

What adversely affected the peasants in the donated areas was the transfer of communal rights, presumably from the villagers to the donees The boundaries of many gift-villages were left undefined, and thus could be taken advantage of by the beneficiaries to increase the land in their personal possession Similarly the right to barren land, jungles, pastures, trees, water-reservoirs, etc , would enable them to tax the peasants for using these The transfer of such rights obviously flowed from the theory of royal ownership, which came to be emphasised in Gupta and post-Gupta times The king claimed taxes on the ground that he was the owner of land As supreme landowner he could grant land to the beneficiaries on a large scale Once the donees received the land, they exercised individual ownership at the cost of the undefined but customary rights enjoyed by the villagers That there existed certain communal rights can be inferred from the fact that in Gupta times land could not be sold in Bengal without the consent of the community and that in making their grants the Pālas formally took account of the wishes of the villagers concerned Thus the transfer to the beneficiaries of agrarian rights enjoyed by the village to the grantees tended to erode peasant rights and created new property titles

These factors may be taken as various modes of extracting surplus from the peasants for the benefit of either the king and or his secular and religious beneficiaries They gave rise to new property relations and a new mechanism of economic subordination from which there was no escape

How did the peasants react to the process of dispossession and impoverishment? Land grants provide no answer to this question, nor do most literary texts, which are mainly courtly literature Some texts, however, indicate two possible forms of reaction One was to leave the country—an old practice referred to in the Jātakas A passage from the sixth century astronomer Varāhamihira quoted in the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* presents the pitiable plight of desolate villages which contain only the dilapidated walls of the houses deserted by unwilling peasants on account of the unwarranted oppression of the fief-holder (*bhogapati*),[1] whose

[1]Ed D D Kosambi and V V Gokhale, verse 1175

atrocities are also mentioned in the *Harsacarita* of Bāna Similarly the *Brhannāradīya Purāna* states that on account of famines and oppressive taxes people in misery migrate to more prosperous lands [1] Peasants, however, could not leave villages which were granted along with their inhabitants, for the donees had the legal authority to restrain them The other possible form which the peasants' reaction to oppressive conditions might take is the assertion of their land rights, as can be inferred from the revolt of the Kaivarttas in Eastern Bengal, described by Sandhyākaranandī in the *Rāmacarita* Hitherto seen either as a popular revolt in which the people asserted their rights against a tyrannical ruler or as a disturbance against the rightful rulers who had been raised to the throne with the consent of the people, the significance of the event can be appreciated better if we bear in mind that the Kaivarttas were deprived of their plots of land given as service tenures[2] and subjected to heavy taxes [3] The fact that literally naked soldiers fought with bows and arrows riding buffaloes shows that they were ordinary peasants [4] Chariots were conspicuous by their absence in the army of Bhīma, who led the abortive revolt against Rāmapāla [5] None the less the rising was so formidable and resistance so strong that Rāmapāla had to mobilise not only his own resources but also those of all his feudal lords to put down their revolt It was probably a peasant uprising directed against the Pālas, who made a common cause with their vassals against the Kaivarttas But we cannot make too much of this single event, for we have hardly anything else to illustrate this form of reaction on the part of the peasants The usual form of reaction therefore may have been migrations But these could not be of much avail in the face of the self-sufficient, almost closed, economic systems to which the peasants were tied down in early mediaeval times Economic conditions and political organisation being basically the same everywhere, migrations did not liberate the peasants from the oppression of the princes and beneficiaries

The feudal order was based on more or less self-sufficient economic units functioning in various parts of the country This is

[1] Ed P H Sastri, XXXVIII
[2] *EI*, XXIX, 5
[3] *Ramaçarita*, II 40
[4] Ibid , 39–42
[5] Ibid , 40

indicated by the rarity of coins, the prevalence of local weights and measures, and the transfer by the kings and chiefs of income in cash and kind from trade and industries to the temples The Pālas ruled for about four centuries but have left hardly any coins, and the same is the case with the Gurjara-Pratīhāras and Rāstrakūtas In South India also except stray coins of the Cālukyas of Bādāmi no coins are found between the fourth and the eleventh century Coins mentioned in Cāhamāna and Sena records have not been actually found Although coins are found in the Panjab, Kashmir and South-East Bengal, their bearing on economic relations in early mediaeval times needs investigation On the basis of what we know it can be said that coins revived on a considerable scale in Western and Central India only in the eleventh century, which again may be linked with the revival of trade and commerce and probably the disappearance of *visti* during that period But, leaving aside this area and period, it seems that local needs were met locally

The decline of trade and petty commodity production is also indicated by the decay of urban sites [1] Archaeology shows that the Kusāna layers belonging to the first to the third centuries A D are flourishing The Gupta layers belonging to the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries A D are in a state of decline, and in many cases Gupta bricks are used in Kuṣāna structures In many urban sites habitation disappeared after the sixth century A D This is true of a number of towns such as Sanghol in Ludhiana, Purana Qila (Indraprastha), Hastinapura, Mathura, Kauśāmbī, Shringaverapur near Allahabad, Varanasi, Piprahwa, Vaisālī, Chirand, Rajagriha, Champa, etc The same position obtains in Mahārāstra, Karnatak and Andhra It is significant that *nigama* which earlier meant a town came to mean a village in early mediaeval times This became a period of military camps and *jayskandhāvāras* from which royal charters were issued If we take into account all these factors it would appear that marketisation had reached a low ebb and local needs had to be satisfied on a local scale Therefore it was in this period that there developed the *jajmānī* system Since artisans did not have much scope for the sale of their products in towns they moved to villages where they

[1] R S Sharma Decay of Gangetic Towns in Gupta and Post-Gupta Times, *Journal of Indian History*, Golden Jubilee Number, 1973, 135–50

catered to the needs of the peasants who paid them at harvest time in kind The *jajmānī* system was reinforced by the charters which insisted on peasants and artisans sticking to their villages Some grants laid down that tax-paying artisans and peasants could not be introduced into a granted village from outside, the purpose of this being that grants should not disturb the self-sufficient economy of the villages Monasteries and temples formed wide economic units, some of them comprising more than a hundred villages Apparently some villages supplied grain, others cloth, and still others labour for the repair of buildings, or else every village furnished part of these articles

The historical role of early Indian feudalism was significant for several reasons First, land grants served as an important means of bringing virgin soil under cultivation in Central India, Orissa and Eastern Bengal The same was true of South India although it has not been covered in our study All in all, early feudalism was a phase of great agrarian expansion Enterprising brāhmanas were given useful employment in the backward, aboriginal tracts where they could spread new methods of cultivation Some beliefs and rituals sponsored by the priests helped material progress among the tribal people Thus the idea that the killing of a cow was as bad as homicide helped towards the preservation of cattle wealth, so essential for agriculture The priests taught the primitive people not only the use of the plough and manure but also fostered agriculture by giving them the knowledge of seasons and planets, especially of the recurrence of the rains The connections of various agricultural operations with different constellations (*naksatras*) were made widely known Much of this knowledge was written down in the form of the *Krsi-Parāśara*,[1] which seems to have been a product of this period Second, land grants provided the administrative mechanism for maintaining law and order in the donated areas, in which all such powers were delegated to the donees Both in the settled and backward areas the religious donees inculcated among the people a sense of broad loyalty to the established order The grateful brāhmanas invented fictitious family trees for the ruling chiefs of the early mediaeval period, tracing their descent back to the Solar or Lunar dynasties and stressing their divine power, and thus provided

[1] Ed & tr G P Majumdar and S C Banerji Introduction, p VIII

validation for new ruling families On the other hand secular vassals helped their lords by governing their fiefs and supplying troops in times of war Third, land grants led to the brāhmanisation and acculturation of the tribal peoples, who were given scripts, calendar, art, literature and a new way of higher life In this sense feudalism worked for the integration of the country From their original homes in Madhyadeśa and Tirabhukti brāhmanas were invited to enjoy land grants in Bengal, Orissa and Central India, which were thus brought close to one another within the orbit of the same culture One of the main reasons why the four varṇas proliferated into numerous castes and the number of the mixed castes shot up to about a hundred according to the *Brahmavaivarta Purāna* was the necessity of finding a place in brāhmanical society for various tribes which were brought into direct contact with the brāhmanas through land grants Thus land grants may be regarded as an important factor in annexing new areas and new peoples to the caste system, which served to give some kind of uniform social order to the whole country At the same time such grants created new titles to revenues leading to the eventual fragmentation of political authority The vastness of the country and the difficulty of communications made it all the more hard for the king to maintain political unity In course of time the brāhmanas and their patrons came to identify themselves with their respective localities and helped foster local culture, thus laying the basis for the rise of regional nationalities in the country

Although the main traits of the feudal formations appear in India between the sixth and the twelfth centuries which was the time bracket for the growth of European feudalism, we notice only a few similarities between Indian feudalism and its European counterpart The grant of villages to priests may be compared to the practice of giving benefices to the Church in mediaeval Europe But apart from an early start the Indian feudal formation differs from the European in several other respects Unlike Europe India did not have a sharply defined class of feudal barons organised in councils and assemblies, nor did it have, at least in early stages, much of military feudalism What is more significant, in the Indian system small-scale peasant plots were not tied to large-scale landowners' plots legally and economically Feudal landlords in early mediaeval India did not directly interest

themselves in organising the cultivation of large stretches of land Therefore in India regular labour service on the farms of the lords were not rendered by the peasants, we have mostly casual or occasional labour service required for war or construction purposes In India we do not have serfdom on any considerable scale, as was in the case with Western Europe We have however a subject peasantry overburdened with all kinds of taxes and obligations The economic hallmark of Indian feudalism was the absence of large farms or manors of the landlords and the prevalence of small scale peasant production The nature of production on a peasant plot was determined as much by the needs of his own subsistence as by the tax demands of the beneficiaries It has to be stressed that in both Europe and India the ever-present beneficiaries claimed from the peasants all kinds of dues on the strength of the royal charters issued to them, but because the peasants were in actual possession of the soil, oxen, and other agricultural accessories, they could resist the increasing demands made by the new-fangled landlords This constant tug of war between the landlords and the peasants was capable of initiating fundamental changes in society But we have very few references to outbursts of peasant antagonism By and large peasant discontent was contained through religious and ideological propaganda And if still the peasants found the situation unbearable they could move to virgin areas and multiply the existing units of production by founding new villages

The question has been asked whether feudalism is old wine in new bottles or an altogether new phenomenon which happened once only [1] The answer in relation to India depends on what we mean by feudalism If we see feudalism merely as political disintegration and administrative decentralisation brought about by chiefs and vassals we will have to admit that it occurred again and again in Indian history till the establishment of British Raj But if we see feudalism as a form of social order in which the possessing class appopriated the surplus produce of the peasants by exercising superior rights over their land and persons we can say that the phenomenon did not appear before the advent of the Guptas In the age of the *Rg Veda* tribal chiefs supported by priests mainly lived on the spoils of war plundered from the

[1] S C Sarkar, *The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies* III (1962–63), 126

indigenous and foreign tribes In later Vedic times princes and priests lived on a share of the produce occasionally extracted from the peasants In post-Vedic, Maurya and post-Maurya periods, down to the beginning of the Christian era, they largely lived on regular taxes in cash and kind collected by royal officials from the peasantry Rich landowners and the Maurya state also used the services of slaves and hired labourers who were virtually forced labour and who were engaged in production [1] A few beneficiaries, mainly brāhmanas, lived on the revenues collected from villages, but this practice was not widespread and the beneficiaries did not enjoy any administrative right But from the Gupta period onwards appear a large number of landlords, who chiefly lived on the revenues from the land earmarked for them, and from the eighth century A D onwards they were given authority over the land itself Naturally never before were the peasants and craftsmen attached to the land subjected to such direct control of the priests, temples, chiefs, vassals and officials as in the five centuries following the fall of the Gupta empire Never before was the class of landed intermediaries so deeply entrenched both politically and economically as during this period The pre-Muslim mediaeval period may be regarded as the classical age of feudalism in India, for the Muslims introduced large-scale cash payment [2] which loosened the direct control of the landed intermediaries over the peasants Thus the feudalism of our period was largely concerned with collecting the surplus from the peasants mainly in kind through superior rights in their land and occasionally through forced labour, which is not found on any considerable scale before the early centuries of the Christian era and partly continues after the Turkish conquest The whole political structure was reared on land grants, so that both secular and religious beneficiaries developed a vested interest in the preservation of feudal principalities not only against similar rivals but also against the insurrections of the peasants

Indian feudalism, however, passed through several distinct stages The age of the Guptas and the following two centuries saw the beginnings of land grants to temples and brāhmanas, and the

[1] Some of these arguments are developed by the author in Chapters V and VI of *Śudras in Ancient India*, and in 'Stages in Ancient Indian Economy', *Enquiry* 4

[2] Moreland *Agrarian System of Muslim India* pp 204–5

number of such grants increased steadily and their nature changed basically in the kingdoms of the Pālas, the Pratīhāras and the Rāstrakūtas In the earlier period only usufructuary rights were generally given, but from the eighth century onwards proprietory rights were transferred to the donees The process of grants culminated in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when Northern India was parcelled into numerous political and economic units largely held by secular and religious donees, who enjoyed the gift villages as little better than fiefs But in Western and Central India the classical type of feudalism was affected by the revival of trade and urbanism, the increasing use of coins, and the disuse of forced labour

APPENDIX I

THE LAND SYSTEM IN MEDIAEVAL ORISSA (*c.* A.D. 750–1200)

During early mediaeval times Orissa witnessed the rise and fall of fifteen or more dynasties, many of them ruling contemporaneously. At a time when communications were primitive, the mountainous nature of the greater part of the region helped to sustain numerous kingdoms comfortably nested in reasonably defensible areas. Their existence was perpetuated by the predominance of aboriginal tribes, passionately fond of their independence. Several dynasties such as the Bhañja and Tunga seem to have been founded by indigenous chiefs, improvised into respectable kṣatriyas by brāhmanical associations—a practice which still lingers in the neighbouring tracts of Chotanagpur. In Orissa although the rulers of the hilly states owed allegiance to those of the seaboard, the tie was slender and tenuous, and in practice the whole territory was parcelled out amongst various ruling houses. The rulers granted land to vassals, officials, temples, and above all to brāhmaṇas, which led to the further subdivision of land in Orissa. The copper-plate land grants, which are more numerous in this State than in Bengal and Bihar during the same period, show that a considerable class of religious beneficiaries and secular assignees was imposed upon the common cultivators.

The secular assignees comprised vassals and officials. Records of direct land grants in favour of vassals are very few, but nearly a dozen terms mentioned in the grants seem to stand for landed vassals. Thus the *bhūpālas*, literally the protectors of the earth, may have been important landed barons, who alone were notified of some land grants under the Bhañjas of Khijjinga towards the end of the tenth century. Perhaps the aboriginal kingdom consisted of congeries of territorial units, each under a tribal chief (adorned with the Sanskrit title *bhūpāla*), who bore the burden of administration in his district. At this stage under the Khijjinga branch there was no place for officials and other dignitaries, who

are mentioned in many other Bhañja grants For some time under the Bhañjas the *bhogīs* and *sāmantas* figured as important elements in the body politic, for only these two dignitaries are addressed in a grant of Vidyādharabhañjadeva [1] The term *bhogī* occurs frequently in the Bhauma-Kara and Bhañja charters Sometimes it is taken in the sense of a village headman, but this office was held by the *mahattara* who worked under the supervision of the *mahāmahattara*,[2] the literal meaning of the term suggests that the *bhogī* did not have to pay any revenues for the land held by him Perhaps he received assignments in return for administrative service In the Bhañja kingdom under Vidyādharabhañja such fiefs were so considerable that the rural people were classified into two units, the inhabitants of the regularly administered districts (*visaya*) and those of the assigned areas (*bhoga*) [3] Under a Somavamsī ruler the *bhogīs* formed a distinct body known as the *bhogijana* [4] We also find fief holders, who were as good as *bhogīs* (*bhogirūpa*) but enjoyed limited rights [5] The bhogis seem to have been connected with revenue administration, and a few of them held the post of chief accountant (*mahāksapatalika*) under the Bhauma-Karas and were employed in drafting land charters [6] A superior *bhogī* was known as the *mahābhogī*, mentioned in an inscription of an unspecified family,[7] but in this sense the *brhadbhogī* appears frequently in the Bhauma-Kara grants [8] This officer is understood as a village headman,[9] but in our view he was a higher assignee, enjoying more villages than a *bhogī* As the *bhogīs* and *brhadbhogīs* recur in the Bhauma-Kara grants,[10] we have here a hierarchy of landed magnates

A graded relationship, possibly regulated by the grant of land and the extent of the supply of military aid to the overlord, existed between the *sāmanta* and the *mahāsāmanta*, who were im-

[1] *EI*, IX, 37, l 16

[2] *EI*, XV, 1, ll 1–10, cf D C Sircar, ibid , XXIX, 85–6

[3] *bhogy-adi visaya janapadam, EI*, IX, 37 ff ll 16–7

[4] *IHQ*, XXXV, 2 Balijhari (Narsinghpur) Copper-plates, l 36

[5] *EI*, XXVIII, 323

[6] Binayak Misra, *Mediaeval Dynasties of Orissa*, pp 102–3, 12, *EI*, XV, 1, ll 33–4 *JBORS*, II, 426–7, ll 40–2

[7] Misra op cit pp 24–5, Inscr 1

[8] *IHQ*, XXI, 221, ll 27–40

[9] Ibid , 217

[10] *EI*, XXIX, 85–6

portant elements in the dominions of the Bhauma-Karas and their feudatories A feudatory Tunga ruler addresses his land grant only to the *sāmantas*,[1] which shows that only they mattered in administration The rank of the *mahāsāmantādhipati*, a title applied to the Nanda feudatory Devānanda III (end of the ninth century), was still higher, and he could make land grants in his own right [2] Whether he assigned fiefs to the *mahāsāmantas* and *sāmantas* is not known But we have definite evidence that the two successive Bhañja rulers of Khijjinga allotted villages to the *māhāsāmanta* Vatta,[3] whose father Mundi was a *sāmanta* [4] Apparently the son rose in rank and augmented the fief acquired by his father Although we have no epigraphic records to show that the *sāmantas* were endowed with land, their later position as an important landowning element in Orissa seems to have developed out of their enjoyment of fiefs in the early mediaeval period

The *rānakas* were another group of landholders, possibly serving as military vassals They were identical with the *rājyanakas*, who were originally members of the royal family, and under the Bhañjas constituted a class (*varga*) by themselves [5] The epithet *upajīvijana* applied to them[6] indicates that they lived on the bounties given to them by the king Even persons who did not belong to the ruling house came to be known as *rānakas* and were granted land The Somavamśī ruler Mahābhavagupta II (1000–15) granted a village to a brāhmana *rānaka*, whose grandfather had emigrated from Śrāvasti [7] Some *rānakas* were assigned more than one village as can be inferred from a charter by which a *rānaka* under the Ganga ruler Vajrahasta (1038–70) regranted a village [8] This class of vassals held important adminístative posts, especially under the Somavamśīs They acted as executors of land grants,[9] chief accountants,[10] and ministers of peace and war [11] In

[1] *JASB*, NS, XII (1916), 291ff
[2] *EI*, XXVI, 77
[3] *JASB*, XL, 3, 166–8
[4] Ibid , 168
[5] *sva-vamsa-samudbhav-asesa-rājanya-(va)rgga*, *EI*, XVIII, 29, ll 17–18
[6] Ibid
[7] *EI*, III, 47, plate F, ll 28–42
[8] Ibid , 31, p 222
[9] Misra, *Dynasties of Mediaeval Orissa*, pp 102–3, Inscr No 12
[10] Ibid , p 17, Inscr No 10
[11] Ibid , pp 66–7

the feudal hierarchy of the Somavamśīs they occupied a high position, preceded by the *rājñī* (queen) and followed by the *rājaputra* (royal prince)[1] The *rājñīs* probably had their personal estates, particularly under the Bhauma-Karas who could boast of six women rulers This seems also to be true of the *rājaputras*, one of whom was given as dowry a tax-free village by a high officer of Vajrahasta[2] The *rājavallabhas*, ranking next to the *rājaputras*,[3] were royal favourites, who could not have been rewarded except in the usual way of being favoured with villages[4]

We can enumerate the different categories of vassal landholders in Orissa *bhūpāla, bhogī, bhogirūpa, mahābhogī, bṛhadbhogī, sāmanta, mahāsāmanta, mahāsāmantādhipati, rājñī, rājyanaka* or *rāṇaka, rājaputra* and *rājavallabha* Most of them seem to have been given military obligations and to have lived on the revenues assigned to them We have no statistics with which to establish the relative status and rank of these landowning elements, but certainly their number and importance in Orissa were far greater than in the neighbouring regions

Quite a few villages were held by the officials, who were allotted land revenues as remuneration for their services The Somavamśī ruler Mahābhavagupta I (935–70) granted four villages in Kosala by three land charters to his brāhmana chief minister Sādhārana[5] The Nanda king Devānanda III (899) granted a village in the Cuttack District to Yaśodatta, his kāyastha minister of peace and war[6] Two Bhañja rulers of Khiñjali, both brothers, each granted a village to an astrologer in the second half of the twelfth century[7] The astrologer, who occupies a high status in the Sena and Gāhadavāla list of dignitaries, may have earned assignments from the Bhañjas of Khijjinga for his services in deciding suitable days and times for all activities of the king A more secular assignment was made by the Ganga ruler Anantavarman Codaganga (1076–1138), who endowed his trusty agent (*āpta-kriyāya*) Coḍaganga with a village along with a hamlet in Kalinga[8]

[1] *EI*, III, 47, plate F, ll 33–4
[2] Ibid , 31, ll 9–15
[3] Ibid , 47, plate F, ll 33–4
[4] Supra, p 130
[5] *EI*, III, 47, B, ll 4–5, C ll 4–5, Fleet, ibid , 345
[6] Ibid , XXVI, 26, ll 19–38
[7] *EI*, XVIII, 29, ll 19–29, XIX, 43 and fn 1
[8] Ibid , III, p 174, ll 30–4

The typical service grants of the Ganga rulers seem to have been made to military functionaries known as *nāyakas*,[1] some of whom were vaiśyas According to a charter issued in the year 526 of the Ganga era under Madhukāmārnava, son of Anantavarman,[2] three villages were together formed into a *vaiśya-agrahāra* and granted to a certain Erapa Nāyaka, the son of Mañci Nāyaka of the vaiśya caste [3] This cannot possibly mean a grant to an army officer for running an educational foundation, the sense in which the term *agrahāra* was ordinarily used in earlier grants, on the other hand it seems to have been an assignment for military service Some evidence of a grant to a *nāyaka* is also found in an inscription of Anantavarman Codaganga, who made a perpetual grant of a tax-free village to his dependant Mādhava [4] The instances quoted above, though not many, are more numerous than those we find in Bihar and Bengal during this period, and suggest that in mediaeval Orissa civil and military officials were paid by grants of villages, which were also assigned to vassals for military service

As against a dozen vassals and officials, we have records of land grants to nearly three hundred brāhmanas,[5] most of whom seem to have been imported from outside The brāhmanas are addressed in a few Bhañja land grants but not in many others belonging to the Bhauma-Karas, the Tungas, the Somavamśīs and the Gangas Either the areas in which these grants were made did not have any brāhmana population or it was not so numerous and important as to deserve special mention in the grants The lists of the donees show that they were invited to Orissa mainly from Madhyadeśa, Tīrabhukti, Rāḍha, Vanga and Varendra [6] There is a view that the Madhyadeśa mentioned in the Orissa land grants was situated between Bengal and Orissa, at any rate there is nothing to suggest that it formed part of Orissa Some grants indicate that although the brāhmanas came from outside they

[1]*Madras Report on Epigraphy*, 1918–9, Appendix A, 3

[2]Ibid , 5

[3]Ibid

[4]*IA*, XVIII, 171–2, ll 109–13

[5]This number is based on the list of inscriptions given in Misra, op cit , since the publication of his work in 1934 more land grants have been discovered in Orissa, but perhaps they do not indicate any material change in the ratio between the secular and religious vassals

[6]Misra, op cit , Index, p i

had intermediate stays in Odra,[1] from where they were taken into the other parts of Orissa

Generally individual brāhmanas were granted land, but sometimes the number of beneficiaries ranged from two to two hundred The Bhauma-Kara king Śubhākaradeva I, who flourished in the middle of the eighth century A D, combined two villages in northern Tosalī into one and granted the whole to two hundred brāhmanas of various *gotras* and Vedic schools[2] This reminds us of a land grant made jointly to one hundred brāhmanas by Lokanātha in East Bengal,[3] where āryanisation by means of land grants had begun earlier In Orissa this process was especially carried on by some brāhmana rulers such as the Tungas and Gangas Gayāḍatunga, whose ancestors had come to Orissa from Rohtās in the Shāhābād District,[4] played an important part in distributing land in the Talcher area to the brāhmanas from outside In one case he granted the fertile land of a village to eleven brāhmanas from Ahicchatrā,[5] in another he apportioned out a village among three brāhmanas from Varendra, whose family originally hailed from Srāvastī[6] Thus this adventurous brāhmana ruling family installed several brāhmana landholders in Orissa Similarly the Gangas seem to have introduced brāhmana landlords in the Telugu-speaking areas of their dominions

The significance of land grants to brāhmanas is not difficult to appreciate The grantees brought new knowledge which improved cultivation and inculcated in the aborigines a sense of loyalty to the established order upheld by the rulers, who could therefore dispense with the services of extra staff for maintaining law and order In return for performing these functions the brāhmana donees were given all fiscal rights, amounting to virtual ownership of the land

These fiscal rights enjoyed by the rulers and transferred to the donees were different in backward areas from those in the more developed parts of India Land grants in forest areas were made

[1] Ibid
[2] *EI*, XV, I, ll 1–30
[3] Ibid, 19, ll 35–50
[4] *JASB*, NS, XII, 292
[5] *JASB*, NS, V, 347 ff, ll 20–2, 33–4
[6] Ibid, XII, 293–4, ll 22–32

under the Bhañjas, the Somavamśīs and the Gangas Yaśobhañjadeva of Khiñjali granted a tax-free village called Pātikomyāna (apparently a non-āryan settlement) with its trees, creepers, thickets and forest (*aranya*), along with the rights to fishing and catching tortoises [1] The village in question was obviously surrounded by forests A Somavamśī charter of Mahābhavagupta IV, who ruled over Western Orissa and South Kosala in the beginning of the eleventh century, granted two villages, which were given along with the right of killing snakes (*ahidanda*) and elephants (*hastidanda*) [2] Probably the area abounded in elephants, for the district in which the two villages were situated was called Airāvattamandala [3] The locality was inhabited by the Śavaras (now Saoras), noted for their knowledge of elephants, and huge snakes living in the holes and caves of the hills [4] The present grant, which was conferred as a fief (*upabhoga*) on two brothers, carried rights to all future taxes (*bhavisyat-kara*) [5] It is not clear whether future taxes meant those levied by the kind or the donee But the latter interpretation would imply an extraordinary right, by virtue of which the donees could reduce the villagers to complete serfdom Some new fiscal rights, appropriate to forest areas, are found in a charter of the last Somavamśī ruler Someśvaradeva He gave away plots of land (*khanda-ksetra*) belonging to two villages, and they carried the rights to the enjoyment of ivory (*hasti-danta*), tiger's skin (*vyāghra-carma*) and various animals (*nānā-vanacara*) as well as of different trees such as tamarind and palmyra, along with forests [6] In all the three above grants the boundaries of the villages were not specified, which left scope for their expansion into the neighbouring jungles But in a grant of the Ganga king Anantavarman the donated village was described as practically surrounded bv jungles, trees and rocks,[7] which shows that it was situated in a forest area Although the terms of this land grant are not laid down, those of other clearly indicate

[1] *EI*, XVIII, 29, ll 16–22
[2] *JBORS*, XVII, I ff, ll 29–49
[3] Ibid, ll 37–49
[4] Ibid, ll 18–21
[5] Ibid, ll 37–49 Only the terms of the grant of one village are indicated, but the grant of the second village may also have been governed by the same terms
[6] *EI*, XXVIII, 50, ll 3–8
[7] Ibid, III, 3, ll 18–22

that certain fiscal dues such as rights to trees, forests, hides, fishes, etc , were characteristic of land situated in backward areas

A striking feature of the land revenue system in settled areas was the transfer by the donors of the villages not only with various kinds of dues but also with weavers, brewers, cowherds and other subjects (*prakrtikah*) The practice was followed by the Bhauma-Kara rulers for about one hundred years from the middle of the ninth century A D,[1] and also by their feudatories, the Bhañjas[2] and Tungas [3] Of the subjects transferred the mention of weavers and brewers suggests that cloth-making and liquor-making were indispensable rural crafts Further, the transfer of cowherds points to the importance of pastoral economy in this part of the country Possibly the transfer of various other artisans and peasants is covered by the term *Prakrti*, which stands for the general inhabitants of the village The fact that they were specifically made over to the donee shows that they were attached to the soil as artisans and husbandmen[4] and in case of oppression could not seek shelter in another village or reclaim virgin land of which there was plenty in this region A similar provision occurs in some twelfth century Candella inscription,[5] which transfer artisans, peasants and traders to the donees But in Orissa this practice prevailed on a far wider scale and for a longer period of time Here it may have been found necessary on account of the scarcity of working population for running the rural economy But such grants reduced the villagers to the condition of semi-serfs, producing surplus for the benefit of brāhmana beneficiaries Many of these were allotted *sa-gulmaka* privileges, which have been taken to mean hunting rights [6] But the term, on the basis of Manu,[7] should be understood as military outposts stationed in the villages by the king, who transferred them to the donees Control over the local machinery

[1]H P Shastri, 'Seven Copper-plate Records of Land grants from Dhenkanal G-Grant of Tribhuvana Mahādevi', *JBORS*, II, 426–7 ll 24–32

[2]*sa tantuvāya-gokula-saundhi (di)k-ādi-prakrt* Ibid , *JBORS*, XVI, 81–3, ll 18–24, *EI*, XXIX, 85–6, *IHQ*, XXI, 221, ll 28–38

[3]*EI*, XXV, 14, ll 12–20

[4]*JBORS*, VI, 239, 115–16

[5]*sa-karu-karsaka-vanig-vastavyam, EI*, XX, 14, plate B, l 19 This is my emended reading on the basis of a land grant of Madanavarman published in a recent issue of *Bhārati* by V S Misra

[6]H P Shastri, Ibid , II, 426–7

[7]VII, 114

for coercion would enable the grantees to exercise their fiscal rights effectively and to maintain the self-sufficient rural economy by means of force We also notice the gradual undermining of customary communal rights in land The donors transferred trees, jungles, rivers, etc , to the grantees [1] Later survivals indicate that in earlier times the villagers had free access to all these local resources, although they were not conscious of their common ownership But once these were specifically made over to the donees, the latter would not allow their use by the villagers without charge Such a practice survived till the nineteenth century in U P , where we find local chiefs levying an axe-tax for felling trees [2] Besides, the villagers could no longer easily reclaim the jungle land for cultivation On the other hand as the families of the beneficiaries would multiply there would be a natural tendency to appropriate the fallow land for their use,[3] thus depriving the peasants of their natural rights to expand into the waste land This was bound to lead to unequal distribution of land in the villages, the lion's share going to the donees and their discendants Moreover, they had the additional advantage of being vested with numerous fiscal rights, which in course of time gave them practical ownership of land This development, however, was not typical of Orissa, the transfer of all the agrarian rights enjoyed by the villagers was a usual feature in the mediaeval grants of Northern India

The list of the sources of land revenue, due to the ruler and conferred on the donees, is impressive But what share of the produce was claimed and how the demand was calculated are not known Two land grants suggest that assessment was made in money In one instance the revenue of the whole village granted to a brāhmana was estimated as forty-four rūpaka[4] and in another as forty-two [5] In Bengal money estimates first appear in the eleventh century, in the land grants of the Senas But it is doubtful whether actual collection was made in money either in Bengal or Orissa during early mediaeval times The revival of money

[1] *EI*, XVIII 29, ll 19–22
[2] Baden-Powell, *Land System in British India*, I, 128–9
[3] Ibid , I, 173
[4] *JASB*, NS, XII (1916), p 295, ll 22–36
[5] *EI*, XII 20 ll 27–8

economy does not seem to have been so strong as to render all payments possible in cash

The net result of land grants was to create feudal conditions in which superior landholders were imposed upon ordinary cultivators These were brāhmanas mainly invited from outside Orissa They not only helped their patrons in maintaining power but also acted as foci of culture, providing a moral and ideological anchor to the Hindu rulers in the aboriginal sea Gradually some aboriginal chiefs also were transformed into feudal vassals The Māṭhara chief Puñja was given the titles *samadhigata-pañcamahāśabda* and *māndalika-rānaka* [1] He was called the *adhipati* (lord) of fifteen subdivisions (*pallikās*),[2] which shows that he was regarded as the owner of the land placed in his charge Such chiefs, however, did not have the authority to grant land, although one of them, Pulindarāja was influential enough to prevail upon the Bhauma-Kara ruler Śubhākaradeva (ninth century) to grant land for the maintenance of a Śaiva temple and Śaiva ascetics [3] A third class of landed intermediaries was formed by the holders of service tenures, who were generally assigned land on the same conditions as the brāhmanas

The brāhmana donees, far greater in number than the secular intermediaries, were granted not only the usual fiscal dues to which the king was entitled but also the right of confining the working population to the donated land This, together with the beneficiaries' inroads on the customary agrarian rights enjoyed by the villagers, reduced the peasants and artisans to the position of semi-serfs In mediaeval Orissa all this gave rise to some typical features of feudal land system, which did not arise there on the ruins of any centralised empire, as in parts of Northern India, but out of a tribal aboriginal background in which the aborigines could be assimilated to the Hindu way of life by implanting brāhmana landlords in their midst

[1] D C Sircar, *HCIP*, V, 209

[2] Ibid

[3] *JBORS*, XVI, 81–2, ll 18–24

APPENDIX II

FORTIFIED SETTLEMENTS UNDER THE PALAS AND CANDELLAS

Numerous petty principalities, each coveting the territory of its neighbour, made the defence aspect of the village important in the early mediaeval period The first and probably the only detailed instructions regarding the foundation of a village by Kautilya provide an elaborate plan for its layout and entrust its defence to certain aboriginal tribes such as Vāgurikas, Pulindas etc , but they nowhere recommend its fortification Some villages are also described in the works of Bānabhatta, but they are not fortified It is only later that the *Mānasāra* enumerates eight kinds of village and defines a typical village as surrounded by a wall made of bricks or stone beyond which there is a ditch broad and deep enough to prevent an enemy from attacking the village [1] It further lays down that the village wall should have four gates [2] The *Mayamata* also recommends that all the villages should be surrounded by moats and earthen ramparts [3] The importance of fortress in general is indicated by its lengthy treatment in the *Mānasāra* It mentions as many as eight kinds of fort at one place, seven kinds at another, and again three kinds of mountain fort at another place, thus giving us a total of eighteen classes of fort [4] Thus, if we bear in mind all this evidence, it would appear that the age of the *Mānasāra* was an age of fortresses We do not know how far the instructions of the texts were followed The boundaries of the villages specified in the land grants do not refer to the surrounding wall Evidently the *Mānasāra* refers to a special type of villages which were either the seats of local authorities set up by the king or the seats of local chiefs and vassals Some of these villages may have developed into strong fortresses

[1] P K Acharya *Mānasara Series*, VI, 102
[2] Ibid , 102–3
[3] IX, 60
[4] *Manasāra Series*, VI, 104

In spite of calamities, natural and man-made, numerous early mediaeval fortresses have survived all over north India Here we present a rough survey of the fortified sites in the Pāla and Candella dominions [1] So far as archaeological evidence is concerned, we seem to be a little more informed of the Pāla fortresses Several fortified settlements of Pāla times are found in Monghyr, and the adjoining parts of Bhagalpur, Gaya and Patna South of the Gangā was the fort of Monghyr, known as Mudgagiri, important enough to be the victory camp and probably the capital of the Pālas In its neighbourhood lay several fortresses Surface explorations show that the present villages of Rāmpur and Pokhrāmā were fortified settlements of the Pāla period in the Sadar Sub-division of Monghyr In the same area lies the fort of Jaynagar near Lakhisarai which seems to have been the headquarters of the Pāla king Indradyumna [2] Not far away was the fort of Surajgarhā, which has been washed away by the Gangā, but the suburbs still show Pāla antiquities [3] In the Jamui Subdivision is situated the fort of Indpe where the walls of the fortress and the ditch enclosing it are still intact Tradition associates it with Indradyumna [4] North of the Gangā in Monghyr were situated fortresses in Naulāgarh, Jaymanglāgarh and Alauligarh

Several fortresses of the Pāla period are found in the Bhagalpur District The westernmost fortress was situated in Sultānganj, where numerous Buddhist images of the Pāla period have been discovered The easternmost fortress was situated at Antichak near Colgong Three seals of Vataparvataka, mentioned as a victory camp in Pāla grants and hitherto indentified with Vatesarthāna near Colgong, have been discovered in recent excavations at Antichak, at a distance of 1½ mile from Vatesarathāna Since the fortified wall of Antichak can be traced to a distance of about 2½ miles, it would appear that the *skandhāvāra* of Vataparvataka was a fortified place covering the present area of Antichak Further, since the seal of a *rānaka* (*rānaka śridevasya*) has been

[1] Although each one of the early mediaeval dynasties has been made the subject of a doctoral thesis, not a single thesis enumerates fortified settlements associated with a dynasty

[2] *ARB*, 210

[3] Ibid , 427

[4] Ibid , 190

found at this place,[1] it would appear that the fortress was in charge of some feudal lord Near the same place seems to have been situated the hill fort of Patharghaṭā, associated with many Pāla antiquities [2] A similar settlement was the fort of Shāhkund on a hill top which seems to have been a Pāla site In the suburbs of the present town of Bhagalpur lay the fort of Champānagar, which, as seen by Buchanan, had a square rampart surrounded by a ditch, probably as old as the Pāla period [3]

The Gaya District contains survivals of at least five Pāla fortresses Thus Amaunā near Daudnagar, which has given us an inscription of the mid-sixth century A D ,[4] contains a mud-fort, probably of the Pāla period Kurkihār, which contains ruins of a brick-built fort and has yielded a large number of Pāla antiquities,[5] especially the bronzes housed in Patna Museum, was apparently a fortress of considerable importance in Pāla times Mention may be made of three other fortresses of the District Dharawat where numerous Buddhist images are found,[6] Keur, and Aphsad where the Stone Inscription of Ādityasena was found [7]

More Pāla forts are found in the Patna District We may begin with Pātaliputra, a victory camp of the Pālas It seems that Patna, which continued as a walled town up to Muslim times, was a fortified place under the Pālas [8]

In contrast to the nine victory camps of the Pālas we hear of as many as twenty-one victory camps or royal encampments of the Candellas,[9] which may have been so many fortresses, at least this is clear in the case of seven camps, Kharjūravāhaka, Vāridurga, Jayapura or Nandipura (Ajayagadh), Kīrttigiridurga (Deogadh), Gopagiri (Gwalior), Kālañjara and Sondhi (Seondha fort, now Kanhargarh) [10] Besides these, eight other forts, including two or

[1] I Owe all this information to Dr R C P Singh, Reader, Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, Magadha University

[2] *ARB*, 303 The neighbouring Antichak is an important Pāla site

[3] Ibid , 100

[4] Ibid , 12

[5] Ibid , 262

[6] Ibid , 140

[7] *CII*, III, 200–1

[8] *ARB*, 350 (III)

[9] S K Mitra, *The Early Rulers of Khajuraho*, pp 163–4

[10] Ibid

three in this list, are ascribed to the Candellas by tradition [1] Therefore in all the Candella fortresses probably counted about two dozen Most fortresses lay in the Bundelkhand region, which accounted for the major part of the Candella kingdom Since the Candella principality was hardly larger than a modern division (its original name being Jejākabhukti and *bhukti* being equal to a division) and since it did not contain more than sixteen *visayas* or *pattalās*,[2] the number of fortresses would appear to be considerable

Evidently the Candella fortresses were not autonomous feudal castles in possession of local chiefs but military centres for collecting revenues from local peasants and keeping them down It seems that every fort was placed under the charge of a governor called *durgādhipa*,[3] and the office held by him was known as *durgādhikāra* [4] Commanders of important forts such as Kālañjara and Ajayagadh held the title of *viśisa*, and were granted at least one village each for their services [5] Probably in the last days of the Candella rule they flourished as full-fledged feudal lords During the twelfth century the garrisons or castle-guard of English royal castles were provided by groups of baronies assigned for the purpose [6] Under the Candellas, however, the commander of royal forts was paid by land grants, but it was not his responsibility to recruit and furnish the castle-guard which was probably formed by soldiers maintained at royal cost At any rate the existence of so many fortresses in the Candella dominion may be taken as important evidence of feudal organisation

No definite pattern can emerge from a fragmentary study of fortresses under the Pālas and Candellas Only a region-wise survey of the forts associated with the various dynasties can enable us to gauge in concrete terms the full importance of the role of these strongholds in pre-Muslim mediaeval times Nevertheless, the utility of fortresses in mediaeval political and economic organisation cannot be denied The mediaeval fort was a multipur-

[1] Ibid , pp 6–8

[2] S K Mitra op cit , pp 161–3, considers *visaya* to be identical with *pattala* and enumerates sixteen *visayas* on the basis of the Candella inscriptions

[3] Ibid , p 160

[4] Ibid

[5] Ibid , pp 158–9

[6] Frank Stenton, *English Feudalism 1066–1166*, pp 212–13

pose institution Catering to the needs of the adjacent countryside, in some ways it served the same purpose as modern towns It was the place where the taxes collected in kind could be stored, garrisons of soldiers could be maintained, and the neighbouring people could seek shelter in times of war, flood (especially in Eastern India) and famine, and above all it was the final instrument through which the prince or the chief could perpetuate his power over the peasantry

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